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Madame de La Fayette

From a Miniature in the possession of the Family

MARQUIS DE LA F[illegible]

THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

IN

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

ATTITUDE OF FRANCE TOWARD THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY

CHARLEMAGNE TOWER, JR., LL.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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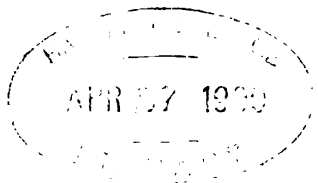

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1789

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THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

IN

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER XV.

LA FAYETTE'S PLAN FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANADA.

LA FAYETTE'S intensely sensitive nature, and his constant ambition to distinguish himself as a soldier, left him full of regret, after the army had withdrawn from Rhode Island to the mainland, that it had been his mischance to be absent from his command at the moment when the action with the British forces had taken place before Newport. Although he had performed a valuable service by his mission to Boston in the interests both of the American army and of the French fleet, and although on his return, after an exceedingly hard ride, at the instant when the rear-guard was still to be brought off from the island, he had resumed his command immediately and effected the retreat without the loss of a single man, yet it was impossible for him to free his mind of a certain feeling of disappointment. From Tyvertown [Tiverton?] he wrote to General Washington, on the 1st of September,[1]—

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—That there has been an action fought where I could have been, and where I was not, is a thing which will seem as extraordinary to you as it seems so to myself. After

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 199.

a long journey and a longer stay from home (I mean from head-quarters), the only satisfactory day I have, finds me in the middle of a town. There I had been sent, pushed, hurried, by the board of general officers, and principally by Generals Sullivan and Greene, who thought I should be of great use to the common cause, and to whom I foretold the disagreeable event which would happen to me; I felt, on that occasion, the impression of that bad star which, some days ago, has influenced the French undertakings, and which, I hope, will soon be removed. People say that I don't want an action; but if it is not necessary to my reputation as a tolerable private soldier, it would at least add to my satisfaction and pleasure. However, I was happy enough to arrive before the second retreat: it was not attended with such trouble and danger as it would have been had not the enemy been so sleepy. I was thus once more deprived of my fighting expectations.

"From what I have heard from sensible and *candid* French gentlemen, the action does great honour to General Sullivan: he retreated in good order; he opposed, very properly, every effort of the enemy; he never sent troops but well supported, and displayed great coolness during the whole day. The evacuation I have seen extremely well performed, and *my private opinion* is, that if both events are satisfactory to us, they are very shameful to the British generals and troops; they had, indeed, so many fine chances to cut us to pieces."

His discontent, however, was of short duration; for his services had been known at head-quarters and throughout the country, and Congress had rewarded him by the public expression of its thanks, which were very shortly afterward communicated to him by the President, accompanied by a graceful and courteous letter from himself.

La Fayette received these with gratitude and with an honorable pride. The text of the Resolution of Congress was as follows:[1]

"That Mr. President be requested to inform the marquis de la Fayette, that Congress have a due sense of the sacrifice he made of his personal feelings in undertaking a journey to Boston with a view of promoting the interest of these states, at a time when an occasion was daily expected of his acquiring glory in the field,

[1] Journals of Congress, 9th September, 1778.

and that his gallantry in going on Rhode Island when the greatest part of the army had retreated, and his good conduct in bringing off the pickets and out-sentries, deserves their particular approbation."

The President's letter read,[1]—

"PHILADELPHIA, 13th September, 1778.

"SIR,—I am sensible of a particular degree of pleasure in executing the order of Congress, signified in their act of the 9th instant, which will be enclosed with this, expressing the sentiments of the representatives of the United States of America, of your high merit on the late expedition against Rhode Island. You will do Congress justice, Sir, in receiving the present acknowledgment as a tribute of the respect and gratitude of a free people. I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem, Sir, your obedient and most humble servant,

"HENRY LAURENS, *President.*"

To this the Marquis de La Fayette replied, in a remarkable letter, so full of the feeling which animated him, and so expressive of the enthusiasm with which he united himself to our cause, as well as of his generous attachment to this nation, that it is worthy of being held in sacred remembrance through all time as the message of La Fayette to the American people:[2]

"CAMP, 23rd September, 1778.

"SIR,—I have just received your favour of the 13th instant, acquainting me with the honour Congress have been pleased to confer on me by their most gracious resolve. Whatever pride such an approbation may justly give me, I am not less affected by the feelings of gratefulness, and the satisfaction of thinking my endeavours were ever looked on as useful to a cause in which my heart is so deeply interested. Be so good, Sir, as to present to Congress my plain and hearty thanks, with a frank assurance of a candid attachment, the only one worth being offered to the representatives of a free people. The moment I heard of America, I loved her; the moment I knew she was fighting for freedom, I burnt with a desire of bleeding for her; and the moment I shall be able to serve her at any time, or in any part of the world, will

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 219.
[2] Ibid., p. 220.

be the happiest one of my life. I never so much wished for occasions of deserving those obliging sentiments with which I am honoured by these states and their representatives, and that flattering confidence they have been pleased to put in me has filled my heart with the warmest acknowledgments and eternal affection.

"LAFAYETTE."

M. de La Fayette had been stationed by the orders of General Sullivan at Bristol, in command of the troops nearest to Rhode Island, whilst General Sullivan himself moved his head-quarters to Providence. La Fayette's position at Bristol was a very unprotected one, with the comparatively small force then within reach, in case the British determined to attack him; but, upon his representing his exposed situation to the general, and apparently at the suggestion of General Washington, he was removed to a point of greater security in the vicinity of the town of Warren. From there he solicited a leave of absence to revisit the Comte d'Estaing in Boston, which was immediately granted by General Washington with his "entire approbation:"[1] whereupon he set out to join his kinsman, with whom he spent several days at the end of September, 1778.

The campaign of that year was substantially ended; active operations were not intended to be reopened before Newport; the main army was holding its position upon the upper Hudson, watching the movements of the British at New York, who were not likely to undertake any new aggressive operations; and it was understood that the French fleet would soon sail for the West Indies. Therefore La Fayette began to think once more of a return to France, which he had contemplated in the preceding winter, and which had been prevented, as we have seen, by his journey to Albany and the projected expedition into Canada.

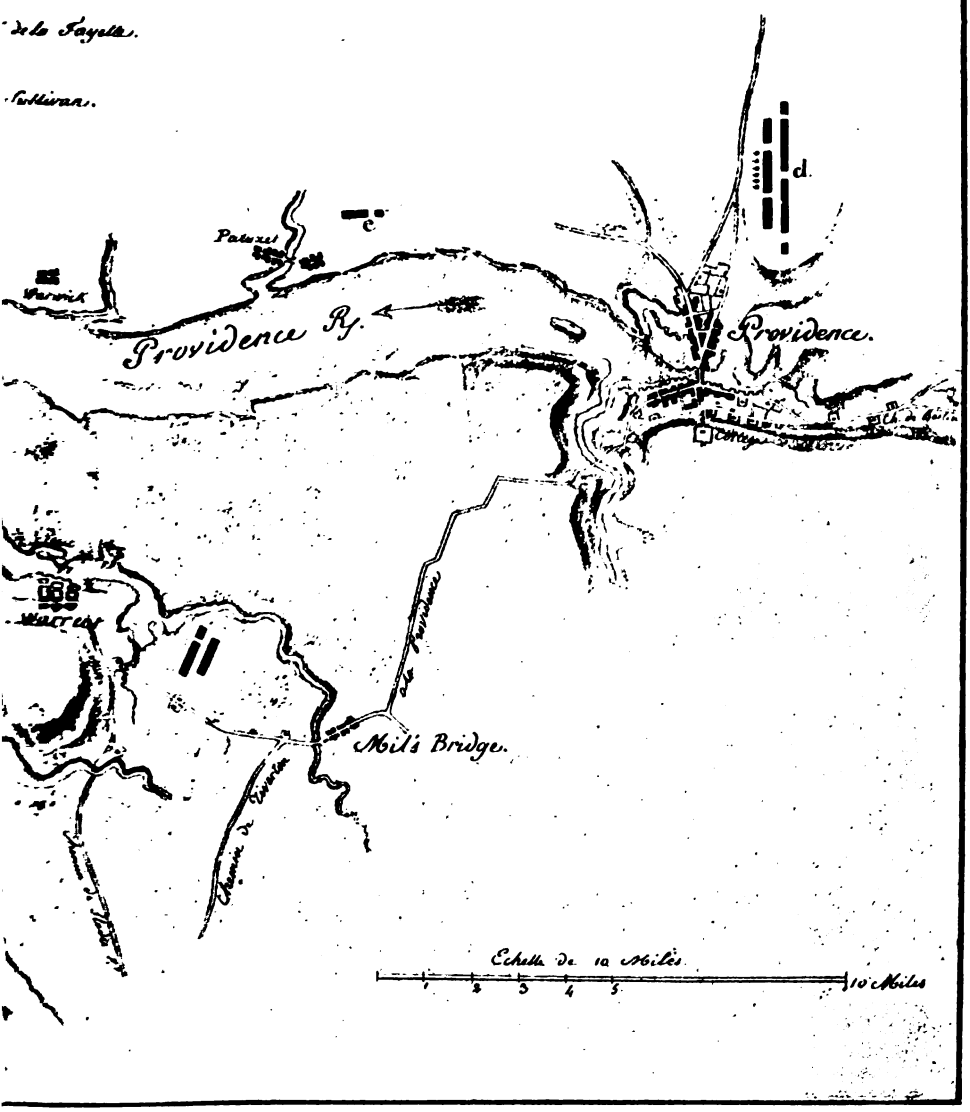
[1] Letter of 25th September: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 71.

Carte des Positions occupées par
a. Camp de Warren.
b. Piquets.
c. Camp de Tiverton.
Commandé par le Major Gal
d. Camp de la Providence
e. Piquet.
f. Positions abandonnées.
Commandés par le Major Gal
Indy d
Boston Neck
Gronnwich
Passage de l'Ouest
Passage
Hope
Patience I.
Prudence I.
Palmer
Konenicut I.
Conanicut I.
Mill
Newport
Rhode Island
Bristol
Passage de l'Est
Tiverton
Taunton R.

Les Troupes Americaines après leur retraite de Rhode-Island le 30 août 1778.

de la Fayette.

Sullivan.



Now that France had declared war, his anxiety to return home was greatly increased, as well by the longing to see his wife and children again as by his desire to serve in war under the French flag whenever an opportunity should present. This opportunity was likely to appear in connection with an expedition of which reports had reached him, for a descent upon England; and the anticipation that he was about to unite with his countrymen in attacking the hereditary enemy from the coasts of France, aroused his highest hopes. He naturally turned for advice under these circumstances to General Washington, whose judgment had so frequently guided his footsteps since he came to America; and he said, in writing to him from Boston,[1] "The news I have got from France, the reflections I have made by myself, and those which have been suggested to me by many people, particularly the admiral, increases more than ever the desire I had of seeing again your excellency. I want to communicate to you my sentiments, and take your opinion upon my present circumstances. I look upon this as of high moment to my private interests. . . . I am sure, my dear general, that your sentiments upon my private concerns are such, that you will have no objection to my spending some hours with you."

Indeed, the friendship which had always existed between General Washington and La Fayette since the latter came to America had now ripened into a deep-seated attachment, remarkable under any circumstances as between men who had known each other so short a time, but especially so in view of their difference in age, in position, and in worldly experience.

La Fayette wrote to the Commander-in-Chief from Warren,[2]—

[1] Letter of 28th September, 1778: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 230.

[2] Letter of 24th September, 1778: Ibid., p. 221.

"Your excellency's sentiments were already known to me, and my heart had anticipated your answer. I, however, confess it gave me a new pleasure when I received it. My love for you is such, my dear general, that I should enjoy it better, if possible, in a private sentimental light than in a political one. Nothing makes me happier than to see a conformity of sentiments between you and me, upon any matter whatsoever; and the opinion of your heart is so precious to me, that I will ever expect it to fix mine. I don't know how to make out a fine expression of my sentiments, my most respected friend; but you know, I hope, my heart, and I beg you will read in it."

Upon another occasion he wrote,[1]—

"Give me joy, my dear general, I intend to have your picture, and Mr. Hancock has promised me a copy of that he has in Boston. He gave one to Count d'Estaing, and I never saw a man so glad at possessing his sweetheart's picture, as the admiral was to receive yours."

To this General Washington replied,[2]—

"The sentiments of affection and attachment, which breathe so conspicuously in all your letters to me, are at once pleasing and honorable, and afford me abundant cause to rejoice at the happiness of my acquaintance with you. Your love of liberty, the just sense you entertain of this valuable blessing, and your noble and disinterested exertions in the cause of it, added to the innate goodness of your heart, conspire to render you dear to me; and I think myself happy in being linked with you in bonds of the strictest friendship.

"The ardent zeal, which you have displayed during the whole course of the campaign to the eastward, and your endeavours to cherish harmony among the officers of the allied powers, and to dispel those unfavorable impressions, which had begun to take place in the minds of the unthinking, from misfortunes, which the utmost stretch of human foresight could not avert, deserves, and now receives, my particular and warmest thanks. . . .

"Could I have conceived, that my picture had been an object of your wishes, or in the smallest degree worthy of your attention, I should, while Mr. Peale was in the camp at Valley Forge,

[1] Letter of 1st September, 1778: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 199.

[2] Letter of 25th September, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 70.

have got him to take the best portrait of me he could, and presented it to you; but I really had not so good an opinion of my own worth, as to suppose that such a compliment would not have been considered as a greater instance of my vanity, than means of your gratification; and, therefore, when you requested me to sit to Monsieur Lanfang, I thought it was only to obtain the outlines and a few shades of my features, to have some prints struck from."

Unfortunately, the whole of the correspondence between General Washington and the Marquis de La Fayette has not been preserved, and we are thus deprived of a series of documents that would have had an inestimable value in studying the events to which they related, after the lapse of more than a century, as containing the opinions of these chief actors, communicated to each other in moments of strictest intimacy. La Fayette himself must have realized something of this feeling in regard to the General's letters at the time; for, in sending one of them to the Comte d'Estaing to read, he begged him, in case he should decide to forward it to France, to retain a copy of it; and he adds, with evident regret, "His correspondence with me would present a fine picture of his character, if certain confidential expressions that were physically too dangerous had not obliged me to burn several of his letters."[1]

Whilst La Fayette was with the admiral in Boston during the last days of September, his mind was occupied with a plan which appears to have originated with him, if we may trust the evidence that we now have, in which he enlisted M. d'Estaing and, later, many members of Congress, and which was for a short time the subject of serious consideration throughout the country. This was the conquest of Canada by the aid of the French alliance. His plan was to obtain, if possible, a force of

[1] To the Comte d'Estaing, 17th September, 1778: Revue d'Histoire diplomatique, sixième année, No. 3, p. 443.

five thousand troops in France who should be sent to America in the following spring, to co-operate with a detachment of the Continental army of some twelve thousand men, to be duly prepared during the winter for this undertaking. A descent was to be made upon Canada at three different points,—from Detroit, from Niagara, and by way of the Connecticut River; and in the mean time the French fleet was to enter the St. Lawrence River and proceed against Quebec.

The same love of glory that had impelled him toward Albany in the preceding winter, and the same belief that the prestige of the French name would make Canada an easy conquest, animated La Fayette now in the development and discussion of a plan with regard to the success of which there were present almost the same obstacles, from the point of view which must necessarily be taken of it in the United States, that had made the undertaking a physical impossibility upon the former occasion. There were neither men to spare from the army nor money for such an expedition, which must be long, complicated, and expensive, carried on in a remote district at a great distance from the base of supplies; and there were two important positions still held by the enemy from which a counter-attack might be made the instant the American position was exposed,—namely, Newport and New York. Whatever advantage might accrue to the United States, after the war was over, from the conquest of Canada, there could be no doubt that for the present there were subjects of much greater importance to be treated of nearer home; and, after all, the chief argument that could be employed in its favor was that Canada would be a constant menace to American liberty if she were left in the possession of Great Britain at the declaration of peace,—a theory which was then pretty generally held, but which subsequent events have not proved to be true.

La Fayette, fired with the anticipation of seeing Great Britain humiliated by the superiority of French generalship and conquered by French arms, beheld already in imagination a descent upon the shores of England which should spread terror throughout the kingdom and should strike the death-blow to British ascendency on land and at sea; the enemy, driven to despair by the retribution that was now to be heaped upon them in return for the long list of indignities and acts of injustice which they had inflicted upon France, would be compelled to recall their forces from every part of the earth to protect their own hearthstones; and the United States would have an opportunity, upon the necessary withdrawal of the British troops from this continent, not only to secure their liberty and to establish an independent sovereignty over the thirteen Colonies, but, with the aid of France, to ravage the West Indies, to capture Halifax, and finally, in order to exclude the British rule forever from this continent, to take possession of Canada and annex it to the Union. Indeed, in the zeal with which he followed this fancy, La Fayette saw the whole British world at his feet; and, writing to the Comte d'Estaing, he exclaimed, "I can think of nothing but of the happiness of being united with you, of Halifax surrendering, of St. Augustine taken, of the British islands on fire, and all confessing that nothing can withstand the French!"[1]

Upon leaving Boston, on the 1st of October, he had obtained leave from General Washington to go to Philadelphia. He arrived there a few days later, and presented to Congress an outline of his plan for an attack upon Canada. It was referred to a committee, who discussed it with him, and who, after deliberating upon it, under the influence of La Fayette's eloquence and persuasion,

[1] Letter to the Comte d'Estaing, 8th September, 1778: Revue d'Histoire diplomatique, *ut supra*, p. 436.

were sufficiently won over to it to present a favorable report; whereupon the plan was adopted by Congress and ordered to be sent to Dr. Franklin in Paris, to be submitted by him to the ministry of France.[1]

This incident is of interest in discussing the career of the Marquis de La Fayette in America only because of the notice it attracted at the time and of the discussions to which it gave rise, and because it presents an illustration of the remarkable influence which he had acquired over men's minds in this country, in spite of his youth, and so soon after coming here. It required very earnest and forcible reasoning afterward to convince Congress that the expedition against Canada was not feasible, or, indeed, that its success was not probable.

There is no doubt of the honesty of purpose on the part of La Fayette in this proposition. He wished to give Canada to the United States, and hoped to do it by the aid of France, in order that, whilst England should be stripped of her possessions, the satisfaction of revenge and the pleasure of assisting in the destruction of her empire might be enjoyed by himself and his countrymen, and that her humiliation might redound to the glory of France. It was a day of happiness for which generations of Frenchmen had devoutly prayed. The sentiment was one that La Fayette had inherited with his blood.

But he was following, in connection with this incident, more than at any other period of his career in this country, the impulses of a too enthusiastic imagination, rather than the conclusions derived from careful deliberation or his sober judgment; and consequently he was then, more than at any other time during his sojourn in America, practically wrong, as well as farther away from the influence which had always been his surest reliance. He had left out of his calculation (or, rather, he had counted as

[1] Secret Journal of Congress, ii. 111.

already certain and, therefore, not necessary to be introduced into the details of the problem he was working out) two of the most important elements, the approval of General Washington and the assent of the Government of France. He had neither of these, in fact. The policy of the French King not to interfere with the affairs of Canada had been definitively settled from the beginning of the war. It had been industriously asserted, indeed, by British agents, as a means of weakening French influence in the United States, that the only purpose of the French ministry in taking part in the quarrel was to recover possession of Canada and to re-establish the domination of France upon this continent.[1] Aside from these false statements, which naturally were calculated to inflame men's minds with the ancient hostile race feeling, particularly before the alliance and before France had unequivocally declared her friendship for the struggling Colonies, the subject was an exceedingly delicate one, in which the wise judgment of M. de Vergennes detected elements of danger far outweighing any advantages that might arise from the recovery by France of her former province. He had declared it to be the policy of the Government, therefore, not to attempt the reconquest of Canada for France, and to co-operate with the American forces so far only as might be absolutely necessary in the event that the United States should attempt to invest that territory themselves. These were the instructions given by the King to the Comte d'Estaing when his expedition set out from France, as we have seen; and this was the line of conduct laid down for M. Gérard, the French minister at Philadelphia. The latter wrote to his chief, in July, "I have observed that the subject of the conquest of Canada during the coming winter or next spring is being seriously discussed, and with great hope

[1] M. Gérard to the Comte de Vergennes, 25th July, 1778; Etats-Unis, t. 4, No. 39: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 265.

of success. Several persons have repeated to me remarks made in this connection by members of Congress, that the British would be dangerous to the United States in time of peace if they retained Canada and Florida. It does not seem likely that we shall be asked to take part in the former of these operations, and I shall be exceedingly careful to maintain by my conduct the reserve in this connection which is in conformity with the purposes of the King."[1]

There is no great likelihood that the French Cabinet would have sent to such an expedition the five or six thousand troops contemplated in the plan of La Fayette, even if they had been formally asked for by the American representative at Versailles. On the other hand, General Washington strenuously opposed the project in every respect. He had evidently not been officially consulted as to such a descent upon Canada until after the committee of Congress in conjunction with La Fayette had formulated the plan which it recommended to the House, and after Congress itself had adopted it. Then a copy of the plan was sent to the Commander-in-Chief, with the request that he communicate his opinion upon it. He replied in a long despatch, in which he set forth the impracticability of the scheme, involving as it did engagements which he dissuaded Congress from entering into because they would be impossible for it to fulfil. He demonstrated that a similar undertaking would require such sums of money as Congress could not command, and such numbers of troops as the country was not able to supply, and that the enterprise was in itself so extensive and so complicated that, under the most favorable circumstances, it could offer but the remotest chances of success. He begged them to dismiss it. But even then, whilst Congress assented to the principal conclusions reached by the

[1] M. Gérard to the Comte de Vergennes, Philadelphia, 16th July, 1778; Etats-Unis, t. 4, No. 23: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 304.

General in his arguments, the advantages to be gained by the conquest of Canada had been so convincingly presented to them by the enthusiasm of La Fayette that the committee still thought the project should not be abandoned; and in their report, which was adopted by Congress, they recommended that preparations should be made, upon a somewhat smaller scale than had been contemplated, to put the plan into execution as soon as the British should evacuate the American ports, as it was over-confidently expected they would do before long.

La Fayette did not escape criticism of considerable severity for his part in this project, nor did every one to whom he explained it agree with him as the committee of Congress had done. Colonel John Laurens was among those who differed from him, and he judged him possibly with more harshness than he otherwise would have done because, as we have already observed, he appears not to have had a strong personal attachment to La Fayette. Whilst the latter was on his way from Boston to Philadelphia, in the early days of October, he spent one day with General Washington at his head-quarters on the Hudson, to make the visit which he had alluded to in the letter from Boston, already quoted. He evidently broached the Canadian project to the General during his stay, as also to Colonel Laurens, who was there at the time as a member of General Washington's military family. Laurens wrote to his father, the President of Congress, on the 7th of October, after La Fayette had proceeded upon his journey and had presumably arrived in Philadelphia,—

"The M. de La Fayette will not long have delayed after his arrival to open to you a plan for introducing French troops into Canada. From the manner in which he explained himself to the General, he seemed to intimate a desire that Congress w^d^ solicit him to bring about this business, as being sensible of its utility to the United States. He did not expect to succeed in any other

way than by intrigues, petticoat interest, &ca. He lays down as self-evident that Canada cannot be conquered by American forces alone; that a Frenchman of birth and distinction at the head of four thousand of his countrymen, and speaking in the name of the Grand Monarque is alone capable of producing a revolution in that country. When he asked my opinion privately on the subject, and asked me what I would say if I were a member of Congress to such a proposition, I replied that I did not think Congress could solicit, or even accept it, because there did not appear a sufficient reciprocity in the benefits to be derived from such an expedition. On the one side there would be an immense expense of transporting troops, loss of valuable officers and soldiers, &ca., in fine, all the disadvantages, and on the other, all the gain. That he did well to say the project could only take place by indirect means, for a minister would not in his cool moments deprive his country of so many troops, with no other view than that of killing so many Englishmen, and conquering an extensive province for us; that he was to reflect that France, tho' powerful in men, had an extensive frontier to guard, and in an European War w[d] not have to do with England alone. This was my private opinion to the Marquis; my still more private opinion is, that we sh[d] not give France any new pretensions to Canada. It is a delicate subject to touch on, but I dare say that we agree in our sentiments, and that the Marquis will be thanked for his good intensions, and his offers waived."[1]

General Washington also, who felt strongly upon this subject, conceived that there were the gravest political reasons, besides the military objections which he had officially communicated to Congress, why the United States should not entertain a proposition the ultimate results of which, to his mind, threatened the independence of this country more seriously than the possession of Canadian territory by the King of Great Britain. His attachment to La Fayette and his sentiments of cordial friendship toward the French nation had not obscured his judgment derived from the varied experience of his life and from his observation of the influences by which the acts of men are shaped. His fears were based upon the abstract

[1] Simms, Correspondence of John Laurens, Letter of 7th October, 1778.

proposition that with nations, as with individuals, under the ordinary circumstances of life, self-interest is the strongest motive power, and the one that will probably outlast other influences; therefore it would be not only dangerous, but unfair, to place any set of men in a situation where their own evident advantage might come in conflict with other obligations. It would be too great a temptation for France not to keep her lost province after she had reconquered it from the hated enemies who had wrested it from her in a bitter struggle; and she ought not to be expected to hand it over immediately to some one else, even to a friend and ally for whom she had been fighting. At this point Washington appears to have arrived, by a very different course of reasoning and under a totally different set of circumstances, at the same conclusion that the Comte de Vergennes had reached in shaping the policy of his Government at the beginning of the war,—namely, that if France should conquer Canada it must be for herself and not for any one else. M. de Vergennes saw that the avowal of such a purpose upon the part of France would make an alliance with America impossible, that it might even drive the Colonies back to their former relations with England, and therefore that, as France could not hold Canada after winning it, she should take no hand in its conquest, and should maintain, as far as possible, an attitude of reserve upon all questions relating to the subject. General Washington also saw that there could be no desire upon the part of the French Cabinet to take the province from one foreign nation merely to present it to another. But he did not think it would be well for the United States that France should occupy Canada, especially in view of her relations with Spain and of the foothold which France and Spain already had in the New World; and, consequently, his conclusion was that France should not be called upon to aid in the expedition. These views

are vigorously set forth by him in the letter to President Laurens,[1] which he wrote as a personal communication to accompany his official opinion asked by the Congress upon the plan of attack upon Canada. The question was a delicate one, especially because Washington suspected that the French ministry might design to secure for their sovereign the Canadian territory, and became all the more difficult to discuss in view of our own dependence upon the aid of France; and his letter is remarkable for the clearness and boldness of statement with which he presented his opinions to the attention of Congress. He was evidently very anxious for the future of the country at the moment when he wrote it.

"To the President of Congress.

"Fredericksburg, 14 November, 1778.

"Sir,—This will be accompanied by an official letter on the subject of the proposed expedition against Canada. You will perceive I have only considered it in a military light; indeed I was not authorized to consider it in any other; and I am not without apprehensions, that I may be thought, in what I have done, to have exceeded the limits intended by Congress. But my solicitude for the public welfare, which I think deeply interested in this affair, will, I hope, justify me in the eyes of all those who view things through that just medium. I do not know, Sir, what may be your sentiments in the present case; but, whatever they are, I am sure I can confide in your honour and friendship, and shall not hesitate to unbosom myself to you on a point of the most delicate and important nature.

"The question of the Canadian expedition, in the form in which it now stands, appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our national deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is, in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country. This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great

[1] 14th November, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 106.

a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. . . .

"France, acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Great Britain, and if joined with Spain, I may say, certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans on our right, Canada on our left, and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians in our rear from one extremity to the other, a people so generally friendly to her, and whom she knows so well how to conciliate, would, it is much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law to these States.

"Let us suppose, that, when the five thousand French troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many might be introduced) had entered the city of Quebec, they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the United States, . . . what should we be able to say, with only four or five thousand men to carry on the dispute? It may be supposed, that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind, as the consequence would be a reunion with England on some terms or other, and the loss of what she had acquired in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an alliance with us. This, in my opinion, is too slender a security against the measure to be relied on. The truth of the position will entirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite, and obtain a decided superiority by sea, a reunion with England would avail very little, and might be set at defiance. . . . Hatred to England may carry some into an excess of confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. . . .

"If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance, with the purest intentions, there is the greatest danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances, and perhaps urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

"As the Marquis clothed his proposition, when he spoke of it to me, it would seem to have originated wholly with himself; but

it is far from impossible, that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France, and was put into this artful dress to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenance of some people, on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken, and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation. But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration, I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish, as much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable."

La Fayette was in this instance unaccountably separated, in conduct and in purpose, from General Washington, upon whom in every other matter it was his habit to rely. Indeed, his attitude is the more singular the more we take into account his relations to the Commander-in-Chief upon every other occasion. He must have found the General opposed to his scheme when he presented it to him at head-quarters on his way to Philadelphia; and yet, in spite of this, he continued to advocate it with the committee of Congress. We have no communication among our documents regarding it from La Fayette directly to the General, nor any expression of opinion from the latter to him; but there are evident traces in Washington's letter to President Laurens of a slight distrust which is met with nowhere else throughout his intercourse with La Fayette; and fortunately this, as it was not founded in any defect of character on the part of the younger man, was speedily removed without having modified or restricted their friendship. Mr. Laurens replied to the General's letter, "I believe, and upon good grounds, the scheme for an expedition into Canada in concert with the arms of France, originated in the breast of the Marquis de Lafayette, encouraged probably by conferences with Count d'Estaing, and I also believe it to be the offspring of the purest motives, so far as respects that origin;

—but this is not sufficient to engage my concurrence in a measure big with eventual mischiefs."[1]

The "good grounds" upon which the President of Congress rested this opinion were, no doubt, the assurances of its truth and the declaration of the fixed policy of France by M. Gérard de Rayneval, the French minister, who was then in Philadelphia, and whose despatches to the Comte de Vergennes at this period show him to have established the most cordial relations with the members of Congress and to have been upon terms of intimacy with the President. It was probably as a result of General Washington's letter, and the "reserve, in conformity with the purposes of the King," which Gérard promised the Secretary of State to maintain, that the plan was abandoned and ultimately sank out of sight.

[1] 20th November, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 110.

CHAPTER XVI.

RECEPTION OF THE FIRST FRENCH MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES—LA FAYETTE'S RETURN TO FRANCE.

THE selection of M. Gérard to perform the delicate task of opening diplomatic relations on the part of France with the new nation which had sprung up on the American continent was very fortunate. As chief clerk in the French Department of State, he had grown thoroughly familiar, by continuous observation, with the whole subject of the revolt in the Colonies and with the political questions arising out of their struggle for independence which were likely to exert an influence upon the foreign relations of France. He had been the most confidential assistant to the Comte de Vergennes. He had known Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane intimately in Paris, and was usually the avenue through which those gentlemen presented the communications of the American Congress to the Court of France. He spoke English well, from having resided for a considerable period in London, and he had acquired by that contact with foreign society an adaptability which, added to a cordial manner and a decided earnestness of character, made him a welcome guest in Philadelphia. His portrait, painted for the Continental Congress by Charles Willson Peale, which still hangs in Independence Hall, presents a countenance full of intelligence and manly strength, the expression of which is indicative of kindly feeling and gentle manners. Gérard was unquestionably, both in his official and in his personal relations, a friend to America.

His arrival in Philadelphia on the 12th of July, after

having left the French frigate La Chimère at Chester, and his presence as the representative of the King of France, in acknowledgment before the world of that alliance which gave to the Continental Congress the character, in Europe, of a national assembly, and to the people of the United States the dignity of a sovereign people, aroused an extraordinary interest. Members of Congress, officers of the army, and private citizens hastened to call upon him, as soon as he had made a visit to the President of Congress, even before he had presented his credentials, to express their gratitude to King Louis XVI. and their appreciation of his generous conduct toward the American people, as well as to assure M. Gérard of their loyal support of the alliance. The earnestness of their language and the enthusiasm which M. Gérard witnessed on every hand impressed him with the belief, which he reported to the Cabinet of France, that these sentiments were nearly as strong in America as that of devotion to liberty itself.[1] Congress entertained him at a grand dinner on the 15th of July, upon which occasion many citizens were presented to him, a circumstance of which M. Gérard took advantage to widen his acquaintance, whilst at the same time, by improving the relations which he already had, he endeavored to cement more closely the friendship between his nation and ours. This was, indeed, especially necessary, from his point of view, as to its effects upon the minds of individuals, because the three Commissioners who had been sent from England in the hope of making peace with the Colonies, in compliance with the intention of the so-called "Conciliatory Bills," and who were then in America, had sought, upon every occasion, to discredit the alliance with France and to weaken the confidence in it of people with whom they came in contact, by shrewd appeals to former asso-

[1] M. Gérard to the Comte de Vergennes, Philadelphia, 19th July, 1778; Etats-Unis, t. 4, No. 30: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 270.

ciation and to the anti-Gallic prejudices of the Saxon race. It must be said, however, to the honor of the forefathers of this nation, that these attempts completely failed. The Commander-in-Chief refused to grant the emissary of the British Commissioners a passport without the assent of Congress; and that body rejected, with a dignified reproof, their insidious allusions to the King of France.[1]

The formal reception of M. Gérard and the presentation of his letters were subjects which received serious consideration in Congress. The situation was a new one; and whilst it was deemed to be of extreme importance as a precedent, there was an unusual anxiety upon the part of Congress that in this instance simple forms of communication should be preserved, as became a republic in its relations with foreign Powers, that a proper respect should be paid to the person and the character of the King's representative, and, what was to be considered above all, that the ceremonial should be sufficiently in accord with the usage of other countries to preserve the dignity and the national honor of the United States of America. A committee secretly appointed for this purpose conferred with M. Gérard. He explained to them the customs which obtained in this connection in European countries, without endeavoring to influence them as to the application of those customs under the existing circumstances; and he left it to Congress to determine whether he should present himself as an ambassador or simply as a minister plenipotentiary, for he appears to have brought with him from France two sets of credentials, either of which might be presented according as Congress should decide.

The discussion of these preliminaries continued until the

[1] General Washington to Sir Henry Clinton, 9th June, 1778; Washington to Congress, 18th June, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, v. 397, 411; Journals of Congress, 13th and 17th June, 1778.

3d of August, when a committee waited upon M. Gérard to inform him that the arrangement of the audience-chamber in Independence Hall had been completed, that the ceremonial had been prescribed by Congress, and that his formal presentation would take place upon the 6th of that month, at noon. Congress had decided to receive M. Gérard as a minister plenipotentiary; and, avoiding all unnecessary titles, in its rigid determination to preserve that simplicity which it deemed appropriate to the character of a democratic people, it declined the distinction of being officially addressed as a "High and Mighty Power," and adopted merely the designation of "The Congress of the United States of America." [1]

According to the plans agreed upon, therefore, everything being in readiness, Mr. Richard Henry Lee and Mr. Samuel Adams, the committee of Congress appointed to conduct M. Gérard to the audience,[2] arrived at the residence of the minister toward noon on the 6th of August, in a state coach drawn by six horses. M. Gérard entered the coach immediately, accompanied by the committee, Mr. Lee taking the seat at his left, and Mr. Adams sitting in front of him, whilst his secretary of legation and the French naval agent followed in the minister's private carriage.

Having arrived at Independence Hall, the guard stationed there presented arms as they alighted, and the committee advanced immediately to announce the presence of the minister; whereupon they were informed that Congress was ready to receive him.[3] In the mean time the chamber in which Congress met had been prepared for this occasion by an arrangement of which we are fortunate enough to have a description in the plan given

[1] M. Gérard to the Comte de Vergennes, 7th August, 1778; Etats-Unis, t. 4, No. 69: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 313.

[2] Journals of Congress, 30th July, 1778.

[3] Ibid., 6th August, 1778.

upon the opposite page.[1] The President of Congress was seated upon a raised platform, with a table before him covered with green cloth; to his right and his left were placed the chairs of the members of Congress, thirty-two in number, forming a semicircle around three sides of the room and facing the centre, where a chair had been placed for the minister plenipotentiary, upon a platform also, raised to the same height as that of the President; the chairs of the members of Congress being placed upon the floor of the chamber, and, consequently, lower than the two seats reserved for the President and the minister. The committee of Congress took their seats two paces to the rear, and a little to the left, of the minister. At the right hand of the President sat the Secretary of Congress; whilst the secretary of legation was placed in the rear of the committee. In the back part of the chamber, behind a rail which divided that space from the other portion, were the public, standing, who, in order to render the ceremony the more imposing, had been admitted upon this occasion by a special Resolution, contrary to the rule excluding them from the deliberations of Congress,[2] and the door of the Congress chamber was ordered to remain open during the audience to such persons as should present tickets, each member of Congress having been authorized to give two tickets "for the admittance of other persons to the audience," which were to be signed by the committee of Congress who introduced the minister.

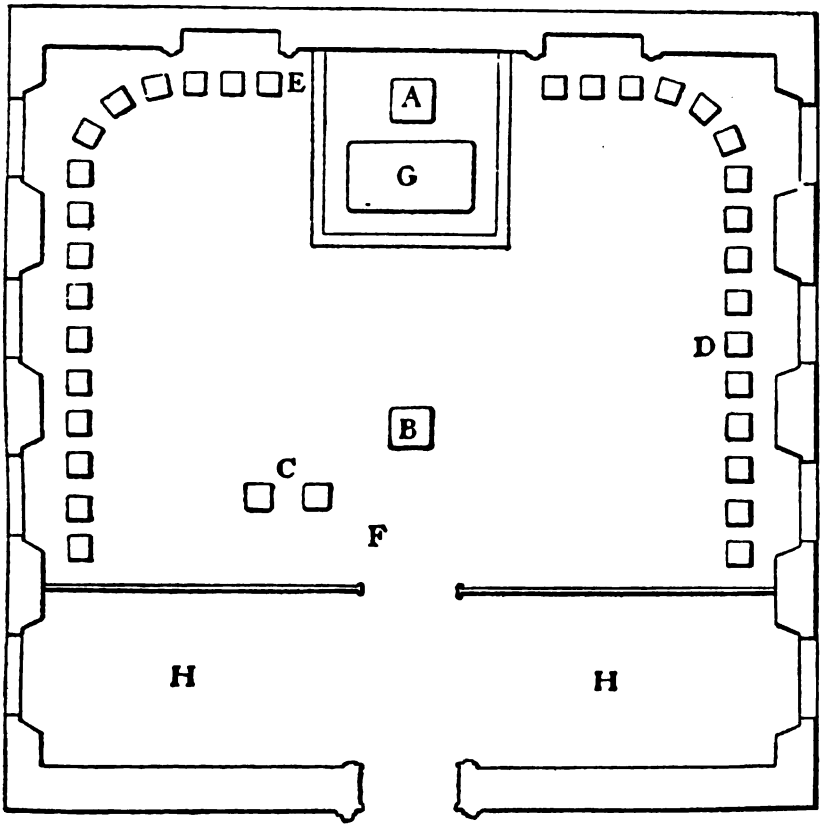
After entering the chamber, M. Gérard was conducted by the committee to the chair provided for him, whereupon he sent forward his secretary of legation to present to Congress his letter of credence from the King

[1] This plan is a reproduction of that made by M. Gérard and sent by him to the Comte de Vergennes with his official report, in 1778. The original still remains in the French Archives: it was published by M. Henri Doniol, in his Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Etablissement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, iii. 312.

[2] Journals of Congress, 5th August, 1778.

PLAN

de la Séance du Congrès des Etats unis de l'Amérique lors de la remise des lettres de créance du Ministre Plénipotentiaire du Roi.



RENVOI.

A. Fauteuil du Président.
B. Fauteuil du Ministre Plénipotentiaire.
C. Siéges du Comité.
D. Membres du Congrès.
E. Secrétaire du Congrès
F. Secrétaire de Légations, et cortége debout.
G. Table couverte d'un tapis vert
H. Public debout.

of France. The President, having received this letter, opened it, and then handed it to the Secretary of Congress, who stood upon the steps leading to the platform and read it aloud. The letter was addressed "A nos très chers, grands amis et alliés, les président et membres du Congrès général des Etats-Unis," and ended, "Nous prions Dieu, qu'il vous ait, très chers, grands amis et alliés, en sa sainte et digne garde.

"Votre bon ami et allié,

"LOUIS."

It was read by the Secretary first in the original and afterward in English. It announced to Congress that the King had nominated the Sieur Gérard to reside as minister plenipotentiary in the United States.

Immediately after the reading, Mr. Lee arose and presented the minister to the President of Congress, who also arose; whereupon the President and the minister saluted each other. M. Gérard remained standing whilst he delivered his address, of which he sent a copy to the President by the hand of his secretary of legation immediately upon its conclusion. The President of Congress then arose to reply; whereupon the minister and all the assembly stood up and remained upon their feet whilst he was speaking. After the President had concluded his address, he sent at once a copy of it to the minister plenipotentiary, by the hand of the Secretary of Congress; and when he received it, the minister arose and saluted the President, who saluted him in return; M. Gérard saluted, in the same manner, the members of Congress, who returned his salute, after which the audience came to an end. M. Gérard was conducted back to his residence by the committee with the same formalities that had been observed in proceeding to the audience; and later in the day Congress gave a grand dinner to him at the City Tavern, at which the Supreme Executive Council of the

State of Pennsylvania was present, M. Gérard sitting upon the right of the President of Congress and the head of the Council at the left.

A curious incident occurred in the latter part of the summer of 1778, which brought the Marquis de La Fayette unexpectedly into direct communication with the Commissioners of Great Britain who had come to America to effect the reconciliation provided for by Lord North's bills. These gentlemen, the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. William Eden, and Mr. George Johnstone, who had arrived in Philadelphia early in June, just prior to the evacuation of the city by Sir Henry Clinton, had addressed Congress upon the purposes of their mission in terms which, whilst intended to produce a friendly sentiment in the minds not only of the members of Congress but of the people of the United States in general, contained several expressions of peculiar bitterness toward France. In their first communication to Congress, which was read on the 13th of June, they had spoken of the "insidious interposition of a power, which has from the first settlement of the colonies been actuated with enmity to us both; and notwithstanding the pretended date or present form of the French offers—" which gave such offence as to cause the interruption of the reading.[1] And later, in spite of the fact that the treaties of alliance had been received throughout the country with enthusiastic joy, and had been duly ratified by Congress, even after the French representative had been publicly honored and welcomed in Philadelphia, the Commissioners were so unwise in regard to the interests which they vainly hoped to promote, as to accuse the people of France, in an address to Congress intended to be spread broadcast, of "a perfidy too universally acknowledged to require any new proof."

[1] Journals of Congress, 13th June, 1778; Marshall, Life of Washington, iii. 537.

This was resented by every Frenchman in the Continental army, and especially by the Marquis de La Fayette, who felt himself personally aggrieved by such an insult to his country. He was not in the habit, himself, of speaking gently of Great Britain, it is true, and he had no reason to expect gentleness from an Englishman speaking of France; but, whatever habits of language and of thought he might indulge in, or might look for among the enemy, in the common speech of daily intercourse, a public declaration of this kind aroused his indignation and appeared to him to call for redress. As he was the highest in rank among his countrymen in the American service, it was unanimously agreed by them that he was the proper person to uphold, in this case, the national honor; and he decided accordingly to send a challenge to the Earl of Carlisle, whose name appeared first in the signatures to this offensive document. He wrote to General Washington of his determination to take this step, in the hope of obtaining his approval, saying, at the same time, that he had mentioned his design to the Comte d'Estaing, but that he wished to be governed in the matter by the decision of the Commander-in-Chief, which he begged to have declared to him as soon as it conveniently might be.[1] General Washington replied that he did not approve of the proposed challenge. He said to him,—

"The generous spirit of chivalry, exploded by the rest of the world, finds a refuge, my dear friend, in the sensibility of your nation only. But it is in vain to cherish it, unless you can find antagonists to support it; and however well adapted it might have been to the times in which it existed, in our days it is to be feared, that your opponent, sheltering himself behind modern opinions, and under his present public character of commissioner, would turn a virtue of such ancient date into ridicule.

[1] Letter of 24th September, 1778: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 227.

Besides, supposing his Lordship accepted your terms, experience has proved, that chance is often as much concerned in deciding these matters as bravery; and always more, than the justice of the cause. I would not therefore have your life by the remotest possibility exposed, when it may be reserved for so many greater occasions. His Excellency, the Admiral, I flatter myself, will be in sentiment with me; and, as soon as he can spare you, will send you to head-quarters, where I anticipate the pleasure of seeing you." [1]

The admiral, indeed, fully agreed with General Washington as to the impropriety of this action upon the part of M. de La Fayette; for not only was he opposed to a proceeding which he considered ill-timed and unnecessary, but he was also alarmed lest, in the chances of single combat, some ill might befall his young kinsman, and he might close an honorable career by sacrificing his life to a false conception of duty. Lord Carlisle was but thirty-five years of age, active and vigorous, and a dangerous opponent; so that, whatever ability M. de La Fayette may have possessed to meet his antagonist in the field, it was by no means certain that victory would rest with him.

M. d'Estaing, who was extremely anxious, besought General Washington to prevent the encounter, his own counsels having evidently failed to influence the Marquis; and in the intensity of his feeling he wrote to the General upon two successive days, notably upon the 21st of October, as follows:

"I have received the letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write to me upon the 16th of this month, and I trust you will have been kind enough to read with your usual indulgence my imprudent despatch of yesterday upon the subject of M. le Marquis de la Fayette's challenge. It was not alone dictated by my tender affection for him; for I consider him not merely as my friend, but as a general officer who will be equally useful to the two nations between which his youthful courage has

[1] 4th October, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 78.

so happily formed the first bond of union. To allow this bond to be destroyed now, would be granting too great a satisfaction to British vengeance; and if the customs of this country do not forbid you to do so, I am sure that you have not waited for my solicitation to deprive our enemies of so cruel a pleasure; I am convinced, even before you have replied to me, that you approve of my principles in this matter."[1]

But La Fayette, in his impatience to reply to a declaration which seemed to his highly wrought imagination to be a challenge to every Frenchman, and without waiting for General Washington's opinion, had already sent the following letter to Lord Carlisle:[2]

"I have always believed until now, my Lord, that my business would be exclusively with your Generals, and I never hoped to meet them otherwise than at the head of the troops which have been intrusted to our respective commands. Your letter to the Congress of the United States and the insulting allusion in it to my country, which you have signed, are the only subjects that could give me any matters to settle with you. I do not deign to refute your language, my Lord, but I am anxious to punish you for it; and I summon you, as the head of the Commission, to make me a reparation that shall be as public as the offence, and as the denial which must follow. I should not have waited so long for this if the letter had reached me earlier. As I am obliged to be absent for several days, I shall hope to find your answer upon my return, and M. de Gimat, a French officer, will make any arrangements, in my behalf, that may be agreeable to you. I have no doubt that General Clinton will assent to this for the honor of his fellow countryman. As far as I am concerned, my Lord, anything you propose will suit me, provided I have the opportunity of adding to the glorious privilege of being a Frenchman, the pleasure of convincing a man of your nationality that no one can ever hope to attack mine with impunity.

"LA FAYETTE."

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[1] Letter of 21st October, 1778; Archives de la Marine, B[4] 146, fol. 98: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 439. And see General Washington's reply to M. d'Estaing, 24th October, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 98.

[2] This letter was written by him in French. Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 236.

To this Lord Carlisle replied,[1]—

"SIR,—I have received your letter by the hand of M. de Gimat, to which I confess I find it difficult to make a serious reply. The only one that could be expected of me in my capacity as the King's Commissioner, which you ought to have foreseen, is, that I consider myself, and always shall consider myself, as not responsible for my expressions or my public acts to any individual. This is an obligation that I owe only to my country and to my King. In regard to the opinions or the language contained in one of the documents published by authority of the Commission of which I have the honor to be a member, unless these should be publicly retracted, you may rest assured that, under any changes that may take place in my situation, I shall never consent to explain them, much less to disavow them, as an individual. I must remind you that the insult to which you refer, in the correspondence that has taken place between the Commissioners of the King and the Congress, is not of a private nature. Therefore I believe that all these national disputes will best be decided when Admiral Byron and the Comte d'Estaing meet each other." [2]

We have no intimation that M. de La Fayette and the Earl of Carlisle knew each other personally, or that they ever met in the course of their lives. This was the end of their correspondence upon the subject of the duel; and, although La Fayette felt at the time that he had won a certain prestige by the attitude he had assumed and by the willingness he had shown to risk his personal safety in defence of the national honor, yet, in discussing the subject with the maturer judgment of his later manhood, many years afterward, he admitted that Lord Carlisle was right.[3]

In the mean time, the thoughts of M. de La Fayette were turned with longing wishes toward his home in France. His letters from there came with great irregu-

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 245.

[2] This letter was written in English, and is here re-translated from the French edition of the Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette.

[3] Mémoires de ma Main, i. 59, note.

larity, and often at long intervals; some never reached him at all; so that his impatience to hear from his wife and child often grew into deep anxiety concerning their welfare. His correspondence shows with what tenderness and affection he kept them always present in his mind, and with what happiness he pictured to himself his meeting with them again. The war declared by France gave him an opportunity to quit America; and he made up his mind, upon leaving the admiral in Boston, upon the 1st of October, that, with General Washington's consent, he should go at once to Philadelphia and request Congress to grant him the requisite leave of absence. We are enabled to follow him in this determination, as well as to conceive his motives and the sentiments which he then entertained, by an interesting letter which he wrote to Madame de La Fayette:[1]

"If anything could disturb the pleasure I have in writing to you, my dear heart, it would be the cruel thought that I still write from this corner of America, and that everything I love is two thousand leagues away. But I may now hope that it will not be for long, and that the moment when we shall see each other again is not very far off. The war, which would ordinarily separate us, is likely to bring us together; indeed, it even makes my return safe, by sending vessels here, and the danger of being captured will entirely disappear; at all events, we shall be two to play at the game, and if these English gentlemen undertake to interfere with my voyage we shall have an answer ready for them. How sweet it would be to me if I were able to congratulate myself upon having had news from you! But I am far from having such a pleasure. Your last letter reached me at the same time that the fleet arrived; and during this immense interval, for two months, I have been waiting, but nothing has come. It is true that fortune has treated both the admiral and the King's minister with scarcely more indulgence; and it is true that we are waiting for several ships, expecting one or another of them to arrive every day; this gives me new hope, for

[1] 13th September, 1778, from Bristol: Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 220.

it is upon hope, that unsubstantial nourishment, that I am now obliged to live. Therefore, do not leave me in this cruel ignorance, my dear heart, and although I hope not to receive an answer to the letter I am writing here, I beseech you to write to me at once, and a long letter, just as if I were only waiting for that in order to start. So, even whilst you are reading this, tell them to bring you pen and paper, and send me word quickly, by every possible means, that you still love me and that you will be very happy to see me again. This is not because I do not know it already perfectly well, dear heart; my affection does not permit mere compliment with you, and it would be idle for me to say that I doubt your love, rather than to assure you that I rely upon it firmly and for my whole life. But it is a pleasure to me that is always new, to hear it repeated. These sentiments are too dear to me, they are too necessary to my happiness, for me not to be fond of the assurances that you so charmingly give me. It is not my reason, since I have no doubt, but it is my heart, that you satisfy in repeating to it a thousand times the words which delight it, if possible, always more and more. . . .

"I have been in hopes that the declaration of war would take me to France immediately; for, besides all the ties of affection that are drawing me toward those I love, my devotion to my country and my great desire to serve her are also very strong motives. I have sometimes feared that people who do not know me might believe that ambition for high rank or the enjoyment of the command that I have here and of the confidence with which I am honored would induce me to stay here for some time longer. But I assure you that I should be happy to sacrifice all this for my country, and to leave it all instantly for her service, without ever mentioning the things that I gave up. The pleasure of doing so would be dear to my heart; and I had decided to set out as soon as I should hear the news. I shall explain to you what has delayed me; and I venture to say you will approve of my conduct.

"The news of the war was brought to us by a French fleet which had come out to co-operate with the American forces. We were upon the point of undertaking certain new operations, and we were in the midst of a campaign; that was certainly no time for me to leave the army. On the other hand, I was informed, upon good authority, that nothing could be done in France this year, and that, consequently, I should lose nothing in that connection. I might, indeed, have run the risk of spending the whole of next autumn on shipboard, and with the wish to fight

everywhere I should really not fight at all. By staying here I had the pleasure of seeing the operations carried on in concert with M. d'Estaing; and those who were intrusted, like him, with the interests of France, told me that my leaving at that time would be injurious, while my presence here would be useful in the service of my country. So that I was obliged to sacrifice my charming hopes, and to postpone the fulfilment of my most delightful anticipations. Now, however, the happy moment is approaching, my dear heart, when I shall be with you again, and the coming winter will see me happily reunited with those I love.

"You are likely to hear so much of war, of naval engagements, of projected expeditions, and of military operations made, and to be made, in America, that I shall spare you the burden of reading an official gazette. I have already told you of the few important events which have occurred since the beginning of this campaign. I have always been fortunate enough to take part in them, and I have never had an unlucky encounter with either bullets or cannon-balls brushing against me on their way. It is more than a year since I was dragging one of my legs about in rather a damaged condition, at Brandywine; but now you would not notice it, and my left leg is almost as strong as the other. That is the only scratch that I have had, or that I shall ever have. I can assure you of this, my dear heart; for I had a presentiment that I should be wounded in my first engagement, and now I have the same feeling that I shall never be touched again. I wrote to you after our success at Monmouth, and I scribbled my letter almost on the very battle-field, with the scarred faces all about me. All the events that have taken place since then consist of the arrival of the French fleet, and its operations in connection with our attempt upon Rhode Island. I have sent a long account of it to your father. One half of the Americans say that I am passionately attached to my country, and the others say that since the arrival of the French fleet I have gone mad, and that I neither eat, drink, nor sleep but according to the direction of the wind; and, between you and me, they are not far from right, for I have never realized so strongly as I do now my feeling of national pride. Imagine the joy I had when I saw the whole British fleet flying at full sail before our own, in sight of both the British and the American armies drawn up on Rhode Island! M. d'Estaing was unlucky enough to lose several of his masts, and so had to put in to Boston. He is a man whose genius and talents and great qualities of heart and mind I admire as much as I love his virtues, his patriotism, and his amiability. He has

suffered every possible reverse, and he has not been able to accomplish what he hoped for; but he is to my mind a man made to be intrusted with the interests of a nation like ours. However great my own feeling of personal attachment toward him may be, I am entirely free from prejudice in the good opinion that I have of our admiral. People here feel great confidence in him, and the British are afraid of him. As to the expedition against Rhode Island, I shall only add that General Washington was not there, and that he sent me with reinforcements to the officer, my senior in date of his commission, who commanded there. We had an interchange of cannon-shots for several days, which did no great harm, and when General Clinton came to the rescue we evacuated the island, not without danger, but without accident. We are now all in a state of inactivity, which we shall soon come out of. . . .

"I beg you to present my compliments and respects to the Maréchal de Noailles. I trust he has received the trees that I sent him, and I shall take advantage of the month of September to send him a great many more, for that is the best time to do so. Do not forget to present my respects to Madame la Maréchale de Noailles, and kiss my sisters a thousand times. If you see the Chevalier de Chastellux, give him my compliments and my kindest greetings.

"But what shall I say to you, my dear heart? What expressions of tenderness shall I find to convey what I want to say to our dear Anastasie?[1] You will find them in your own heart, and in mine which is equally well known to you. Cover her with kisses; teach her to love me by loving you; for we are too closely united for any one loving either of us not to love the other. This poor little child must now be all to me; she has two places to fill in my heart, and our misfortune[2] has imposed a hard task upon her. But my heart tells me that she will fulfil it as far as it may be possible for her to do so. I love her to madness; and though I tremble lest I may lose her also, I cannot help yielding to the strong impulses of my affection. Adieu, my dear heart. When shall I be permitted to see you and not to leave you again; to make you as happy as you will make me; to ask your pardon, at your knees? Adieu, adieu; we shall not be separated now for very long."

Upon his road from Boston to Philadelphia, La Fayette

[1] La Fayette's second daughter, born during his absence in America.

[2] The loss of his eldest child, Henriette.

stopped at the head-quarters, at Fishkill, on the 6th of October, and spent the day with General Washington. He expressed to him the wish, which the General approved of and afterward recommended to the favorable consideration of Congress, that in leaving America now, to return to his own country, he should not sever his relations with it altogether, but rather might still be considered an officer of the United States, whom personal matters of importance obliged to absent himself temporarily, and that his leave should be in the nature of a furlough instead of an honorable discharge. Of course it was impossible for him to foresee what his circumstances might be after his return to France and at the end of a year from that time, —what the wishes of his King might be as to his future conduct, or whether the exigencies of his own domestic affairs would permit him to return here during the continuance of the war; yet he did not wish to break off entirely his relations with America. Besides, he was fearful that if he resigned absolutely from the service of the United States at this time, without any expressed reason beyond the desire to see his wife and child, his motive might be attributed to some cause of offence. His love for America, and the kindness with which he had been treated, during his service here, by all classes of society, would not permit him to take a step which might give rise to such a suspicion. M. Gérard agreed with him that it would be better to ask for a simple leave of absence, as otherwise his purpose might be misunderstood by Congress and by the people.[1] And indeed this advice was not unwise in its anticipations of what was likely to occur; for there existed a feeling in the public mind that something was wrong, and the following notice appeared in one of the Philadelphia newspapers of the time:[2]

[1] M. Gérard to the Comte de Vergennes, Etats-Unis, t. 5, No. 33: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 422.

[2] The Pennsylvania Packet, 11th February, 1778.

"*Extract of a letter from Baltimore, dated January 4th, 1778.*— We can assure the public that the Marquis De Fayette's having taken his leave of Congress to take his departure for France, by the way of Boston, is not owing to any disgust, or public reason of a political nature, but flows from the earnest solicitation of his private connections. The French gentlemen who attended him to the eastward will return to their respective commands, when they have paid him the civilities due to his rank and character."

On the 13th of October he reached Philadelphia, and presented his petition to Congress, addressed to the President, Mr. Laurens, which was read the same day:[1]

"SIR—Whatever care I schould take not to employ the precious instants of congress in private considerations, I beg leave to lay before them my present circumstances, with that confidence which naturally springs from affection and gratitude. The sentiments which bind me to my country can never be more properly spoken of than in presence of men who have done so much for theyr own. As long as I thought I could dispose of myself I made it my pride and pleasure to fight under American colours, in defence of a cause which I dare more particularly call ours, because I had the good luck of bleeding for it. Now, Sir, that france is involved in a war, I am urg'd by a sense of duty, as well as by patriotic love, to present myself before the King, and know in what manner he judges proper to employ my services. The most agreeable of all will alwaïs be such as may enable me to serve the common cause among those whose friendship I have had the happiness to obtain, and whose fortunes I had the honor to follow in less smiling times. That reason, and others, which I leave to the feelings of congress, engage me to beg from them the liberty of going home for the next winter.

"As long as there was any hopes of an active campaign, I did not think of leaving the field. Now that I see a very peaceable and undisturb'd moment, I take this opportunity of waiting on congress. In case my request is granted, I schall manage so my departure as to be certain before going off that the campaign is really over. Inclos'd you will find a letter from his excellency General Washington, where he expresses his assent to my getting leave of absence. I dare flatter myself that I schall be look'd on

[1] Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 233.

as a soldier on furlough, who most heartly wants to join again his colours, and his most esteemed and belov'd fellow-soldiers. In case it was thought that I can be any way useful to the service of America, when I schall find myself among my countrymen, in case any exertion of mine is deem'd serviceable, I hope, sir, I schall always be consider'd as the man who is the most interested in the welfare of these United States, and who has the most perfect affection, regard, and confidence for theyr representatives. With the highest regard, I have the honour

"to be, Sir,
"Your Excellency's most
"obedient humble Servant,
"LAFAYETTE."

This was accompanied by a letter from General Washington, dated at the head-quarters, at Fishkill, the 6th of October:[1]

"TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

"SIR,—This will be delivered to you by Major-General the Marquis de Lafayette. The generous motives, which first induced him to cross the Atlantic and enter the army of the United States, are well known to Congress. Reasons equally laudable now engage his return to France, which in its present circumstances claims his services. His eagerness to offer his duty to his prince and country, however great, could not influence him to quit the continent in any stage of an unfinished campaign. He resolved to remain at least till the close of the present, and embraces this moment of suspense to communicate his wishes to Congress, with a view of having the necessary arrangements made in time, and of being still within reach, should any occasion offer of distinguishing himself in the field.

"The Marquis at the same time, from a desire of preserving a relation with us, and a hope of having it yet in his power to be useful as an American officer, solicits only a furlough sufficient for the purposes above mentioned. A reluctance to part with an officer, who unites to all the military fire of youth an uncommon maturity of judgment, would lead me to prefer his being absent on this footing, if it depended on me. I shall always be happy to give such a testimony of his services, as his bravery and con-

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 83.

duct on all occasions entitle him to; and I have no doubt, that Congress will add suitable expressions of their sense of his merit, and their regret on account of his departure."

These two communications were referred by Congress to a committee, made up of Mr. Gouverneur Morris, Mr. Richard Henry Lee, Mr. Witherspoon, Mr. Samuel Adams, and Mr. William Henry Drayton, who reported to Congress on the 21st of October; whereupon the following Resolutions were passed:[1]

"*Resolved*, That the marquis de la Fayette, major general in the service of the United States, have leave to go to France; and that he return at such time as shall be most convenient to him.

"*Resolved*, That the president write a letter to the marquis de la Fayette, returning him the thanks of Congress for that disinterested zeal which led him to America, and for the services he hath rendered to the United States by the exertion of his courage and abilities on many signal occasions.

"*Resolved*, That the minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America at the court of Versailles be directed to cause an elegant sword, with proper devices, to be made and presented, in the name of the United States, to the marquis de la Fayette."

This was communicated by the President to M. de La Fayette in the following letter:[2]

"PHILADELPHIA, 24 October, 1778.

"SIR,—I had the honour of presenting to congress your letter, soliciting leave of absence, and I am directed by the house to express their thanks for your zeal in promoting that just cause in which they are engaged, and for the disinterested services you have rendered to the United States of America. In testimony of the high esteem and affection in which you are held by the good people of these states, as well as in acknowledgment of your gallantry and military talents, displayed on many signal occasions, their representatives in congress assembled have ordered an elegant sword to be presented to you by the American minister at the court of Versailles.

"Enclosed within the present cover will be found an act of

[1] Journals of Congress, 21st October, 1778.

[2] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 234.

congress, of the 21st instant, authorizing these declarations, and granting a furlough for your return to France, to be extended at your own pleasure. I pray God to bless and protect you, Sir; to conduct you in safety to the presence of your prince, and the re-enjoyment of your noble family and friends. I have the honour to be, with the highest respect, and with the most sincere affection, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

"HENRY LAURENS, *President.*"

General de La Fayette was now prepared to go to France. In addition to their expressions of consideration for him at the moment of his departure, Congress had ordered their best war-vessel, the frigate Alliance, to convey him across the ocean, and she was then at Boston, waiting for him to go aboard. He wrote a letter of thanks to Mr. Laurens, the President, on the 26th of October,[1] after which, having made the final arrangements for his journey, and having said farewell to his friends in Philadelphia, he set out. The autumn weather had already become inclement, so that one travelling on horseback, as he was, would be likely to encounter storms to which he would necessarily be exposed upon a journey of some four hundred miles; and, indeed, he started upon it in a hard and chilling rain. La Fayette was an unusually vigorous man, to whom such things were of little or no consequence in ordinary times; and he had been accustomed during the last two campaigns to face the elements in any season of the year. But the probability is that the labors of the preceding summer months had overtaxed him; there had been a long strain of anxiety and care during the operations in Rhode Island,—more, indeed, than he realized himself, and more than his own share of the responsibility would reasonably have obliged him to assume, but which his ardent nature and his excessive sensitiveness for the national honor would not permit him to throw off whilst the French fleet was strug-

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 238.

gling against disaster and disappointment in American waters. The reaction from this had probably now set in after the tension was relieved, and La Fayette was worn out and ill. He continued, however, to ride in the rain, and, in spite of the fever which soon laid hold of him, to take part in the festivities that were prepared for his reception by the people of every town through which he passed, strengthening himself, as he imagined, for further effort, by frequent draughts of rum and wine and tea, until he had reached Fishkill, where he succumbed to a violent illness. For many days his fever raged so that his condition gave the greatest concern to those about him, and the news of it spread through the country. Everywhere the people gave expression to their sympathy and regret, and especially in the army there was the profoundest grief when it was reported that *the Marquis*, as La Fayette was always familiarly called, *the soldier's friend*, was going to die. General Washington, whose head-quarters were but eight miles away from the place where he lay, went every day to ask for him; though, fearful of exciting him, he did not enter the house, but merely inquired for him of his physician, Dr. Cochran, and frequently went away with a sorrowing heart. La Fayette himself believed that his end had come; he thought with anguish of the beloved ones in France whom he should not see again, and, having exacted a promise from his attendants that he should be informed when death approached, he resigned himself to fate, though with the feeling that, young as he was, if the opportunity were now offered him of assuring the future by making a bargain, he would agree to live only three months longer, provided that in that time he might be permitted to see his friends once more, and to hear of the successful termination of the American war.[1]

[1] Mémoires de ma Main, i. 62.

But happily his end was not yet. Under the skilful treatment of Dr. John Cochran,[1] Surgeon-General of the Continental Army, who was sent by General Washington to take care of him, he rallied, and at the end of three weeks the crisis had passed and he was upon the road toward recovery. A part of his period of convalescence was passed delightfully in the company of General Washington, whom he now frequently saw, and with whom he reviewed the times gone by since they first met and recalled with pleasure the incidents of the war in which they had taken part together. Time thus wore on until December had come before La Fayette was ready to continue his journey to Boston. His parting from General Washington was full of tenderness, and Washington wrote to him shortly afterward, to send him a warm expression of his attachment, in which he said,[2] "I am persuaded, my dear Marquis, that there is no need of fresh proofs to convince you, either of my affection for you personally, or of the high opinion I entertain of your military talents and merit," but added that he could not forbear indulging his friendship by sending the following letter to Dr. Benjamin Franklin, American Minister in France:

"PHILADELPHIA, 28 December, 1778.

"SIR,—The Marquis de Lafayette, having served with distinction as Major-General in the army of the United States for two campaigns, has been determined, by the prospects of a European war, to return to his native country. It is with pleasure, that I embrace the opportunity of introducing to your personal acquaintance a gentleman, whose merit cannot have left him unknown to you by reputation. The generous motives, which first induced him to cross the Atlantic; the tribute, which he paid to gallantry at the Brandywine; his success in Jersey before he had recovered from his wounds, in an affair where he commanded

[1] See "The Medical Department of the Revolutionary War," Magazine of American History, September, 1884, p. 241.

[2] 29th December, 1778: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 149.

militia against British grenadiers; the brilliant retreat, by which he eluded a combined manœuvre of the whole British force in the last campaign; his services in the enterprise against Rhode Island; are such proofs of his zeal, military ardor, and talents, as have endeared him to America, and must greatly recommend him to his Prince.

"Coming with so many titles to claim your esteem, it were needless for any other purpose, than to indulge my own feelings, to add, that I have a very particular friendship for him; and that whatever services you may have it in your power to render him will confer an obligation on one, who has the honor to be, with the greatest esteem, regard and respect, Sir, &c."

When La Fayette arrived in Boston, whither the devoted Dr. Cochran accompanied him as soon as he was able again to ride, he was received with the warmest expressions of welcome and of sympathy from the citizens. The crew of the Alliance was not full, so that the vessel was not quite ready to put to sea. The Council offered to provide the requisite number of men by impressing them, but La Fayette would not consent to such a measure, and a crew was finally obtained by recruiting such as were willing to enlist, many of them being deserters from the British service or prisoners of war detained in Boston,—an ill-assorted company, whose character was extremely doubtful at best, and whose treacherous conduct subsequently came very near bringing serious disaster upon M. de La Fayette.

It happened just at this time that the subject of the expedition to Canada, which had been still entertained by Congress, was finally dismissed. The committee appointed to confer with General Washington reported against it after very careful discussion and very mature consideration, and the President thereupon wrote, by the instruction of Congress, a letter to the Marquis de La Fayette; this was forwarded to him at Boston enclosed in the one from General Washington, dated at Philadelphia the 29th of December, in which he announced to him

that "a certain expedition, after a full consideration of all circumstances, has been laid aside."[1] The official letter was as follows:

"SIR,—The Congress have directed me to inform you, that, although the emancipation of Canada is a very desirable object, yet, considering the exhausted state of their resources, and the derangement of their finances, they conceive it very problematical whether they could make any solid impression in that quarter, even on the uncertain contingency that the troops of Great Britain should evacuate the posts they now hold. More extensive and more accurate information, than they formerly possessed, has induced a conviction, that some capital movements meditated against that province are utterly impracticable from the nature of the country, the defect of supplies, and the impossibility of transporting them thither; to say nothing of the obstacles, which a prudent enemy might throw in the way of an assailing army. Under such circumstances, to enter into engagements with their allies appears not only imprudent but unjust.

"In any case, a perfect coöperation must depend upon a variety of incidents, which human prudence can neither foresee nor provide for. Under the present circumstances it cannot be expected. The consequence then would certainly be a misapplication and possibly the destruction of a part of the force of France; and that every force employed on a less hazardous expedition would equally call forth the attention of Great Britain, equally become the object of her efforts, and consequently give equal aid to the United States. Considering these, and other reasons of the like kind, Congress have determined, however flattering the object, not to risk a breach of the public faith, or the injury of an ally, to whom they are bound by principles of honor, gratitude and affection. I am &c.

"JOHN JAY, *President.*"

This letter did not reach La Fayette before he sailed; for its transmission had been delayed by the difficulty of travelling at that season, and, as M. de La Fayette was the bearer of very important papers to France, especially of the instructions of Congress to Dr. Franklin, he had

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 149.

become exceedingly anxious to begin his voyage, and therefore had put to sea on the 11th of January, 1779, as we know by the following letters written by him to General Washington:[1]

"BOSTON, 5th January, 1779.

"DEAR GENERAL,—In my difficult situation, at such a distance from you, I am obliged to take a determination by myself, which, I hope, will meet with your approbation. You remember, that in making full allowance for deliberations, the answer from congress was to reach me before the 15th of last month, and I have long since waited without even hearing from them. Nay, many gentlemen from Philadelphia assure me, congress believe that I am gone long ago. Though my affairs call me home, private interests would, however, induce me to wait for your excellency's letters, for the decision of congress about an exchange in case I should be taken, and for the last determinations concerning the plans of the next campaign.

"But I think the importance of the despatches I am the bearer of; the uncertainty and improbability of receiving any others here; my giving intelligence at Versailles may be for the advantage of both nations; the inconvenience of detaining the fine frigate, on board which I return, and the danger of losing all the men, who desert very fast, are reasons so important as oblige me not to delay any longer. I am the more of that opinion from congress having resolved to send about this time three fast sailing vessels to France, and the marine committee having promised me to give the despatches to such officers as I would recommend; it is a very good way of forwarding their letters, and sending such as your excellency may be pleased to write me. I beg you will send copies of them by the several vessels.

"To hear from you, my most respected friend, will be the greatest happiness I can feel. The longer the letters you write, the more blessed with satisfaction I shall think myself. I hope you will not refuse me that pleasure as often as you can, I hope you will ever preserve that affection which I return by the tenderest sentiments.

"How happy, my dear general, I should be to come next spring, principally, as it might yet be proposed, I need not to say. Your first letter will let me know what I am to depend upon on that head, and, I flatter myself, the first from me will

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 242.

confirm to you that I am at liberty, and that most certainly I intend to come next campaign.

"My health is now in the best condition, and I would not remember I ever was sick, were it not for the marks of friendship you gave me on that occasion. My good doctor has attended me with his usual care and tenderness. He will see me on board and then return to head-quarters; but the charge of your friend was entrusted to him till I was on board the frigate. I have met with the most kind hospitality in this city, and, drinking water excepted, the doctor has done everything he could to live happy; he dances and sings at the assemblies most charmingly.

"The gentlemen who, I hope, will go to France, have orders to go to headquarters; and I flatter myself, my dear general, that you will write me by them. I beg you will let the bearer of this, Captain la Colombe, know that I recommend him to your excellency for the commission of major.

"Be so kind, my dear general, as to present my best respects to your lady and the gentlemen of your family. I hope you will quietly enjoy the pleasure of being with Mrs. Washington, without any disturbance from the enemy, till I join you again; I also hope you will approve of my sailing, which, indeed, was urged by necessity, after waiting so long.

"Farewell, my most beloved general; it is not without emotion I bid you this last adieu, before so long a separation. Don't forget an absent friend, and believe me for ever and ever, with the highest respect and tenderest affection.

"LA FAYETTE."

"ON BOARD THE ALLIANCE, 10th January, 1779.

"I open again my letter, my dear general, to let you know that I am not yet gone, but if the wind proves fair, I shall sail to-morrow. Nothing from Philadelphia; nothing from head-quarters. So that everybody, as well as myself, is of the opinion that I should be wrong to wait any longer. I hope I am right, and I hope to hear soon from you. Adieu, my dear, and forever beloved friend,—adieu!"

"ON BOARD THE ALLIANCE,
"OFF BOSTON, 11th January, 1779.

"The sails are just going to be hoisted, my dear general, and I have but time to take my last leave of you. I may now be certain that congress did not intend to send anything more by me. The navy board and Mr. Nevil write me this very morning from Boston, that the North River is passable; that a gentleman from camp says, he did not hear of anything like an express for

me. All agree for certain that congress think I am gone, and that the sooner I go the better.

"Farewell, my dear general; I hope your French friend will ever be dear to you; I hope I shall soon see you again, and tell you myself with what emotion I now leave the coast you inhabit, and with what affection and respect I am for ever, my dear general, your respectful and sincere friend."

"LA FAYETTE."

Here closes the first period of the Marquis de La Fayette's career in America. Already he had taken that remarkable hold upon the hearts of the people which no other foreigner has ever had, and in the short period of his stay here—for it was only nineteen months since he came ashore at Georgetown and less than a year and a half since he presented himself to Congress in Philadelphia—his amiable temper, his extraordinary prudence and judgment, his unselfish devotion, and his exalted integrity, had won him a multitude of friends, who now parted with him regretfully, whilst his conduct as a soldier, as a statesman, and as a friend of American liberty had placed him, by the esteem of the nation, in the foreground among the acknowledged leaders of the Revolution. Indeed, M. Gérard, the French minister, wrote to the Secretary of State, in France, that he could not forbear calling his attention to the wisdom and ability with which M. de La Fayette had taken part in the discussion of the international questions which had arisen between the two countries, or to the extraordinary position he had created for himself during his services in the United States, by conduct that was equally gentle, prudent, and courageous, which "has made him the idol of Congress, of the army, and of the people of America."[1]

But what shows conclusively more than any other evidence of the time with what genuine esteem the Marquis

[1] Letter to the Comte de Vergennes; Etats-Unis, t. 5, No. 33: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iii. 422.

de La Fayette was regarded here, and what affectionate sympathy was felt for him in this parting, is the unusual step which Congress took in his behalf, in addressing the following letter to the King of France:[1]

"To our great, faithful, and beloved friend and ally,

"LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH, King of France and Navarre.

"The Marquis de Lafayette having obtained our leave to return to his native country, we could not suffer him to depart without testifying our deep sense of his zeal, courage, and attachment. We have advanced him to the rank of major-general in our armies, which, as well by his prudent as spirited conduct, he has manifestly merited. We recommend this young nobleman to your majesty's notice, as one whom we know to be wise in council, gallant in the field, and patient under the hardships of war. His devotion to his sovereign has led him in all things to demean himself as an American, acquiring thereby the confidence of these United States, your good and faithful friends and allies, and the affection of their citizens. We pray God to keep your majesty in his holy protection.

"Done at Philadelphia, the 22nd day of October, 1778, by the congress of the United States of North America, your good friends and allies.

"HENRY LAURENS,
"*President.*"

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 235; Journals of Congress, 21st October, 1778.

CHAPTER XVII.

SERVICES TO AMERICA AT THE COURT OF VERSAILLES.

General de La Fayette returned to his native country, which he had left so short a time before under the threatened penalties of a *lettre-de-cachet*, covered now with honor and respect by the people whom he had served. He came back distinguished as a soldier who had proved his gallantry in the field and who gave good promise of the future; matured by the remarkable career that fortune had opened for him in America, which brought him into close contact with men who were deliberating upon the most serious questions of national policy and of war. He came in an armed ship sent especially to bear him across the ocean, with letters of credence which gave him almost the authority of an ambassador from the United States to the Court of France. His coming seemed the ideal of glory and of success to the younger Frenchmen of his kindred and acquaintance at the Court; it was an event of very unusual interest for the ministers of the King's Cabinet. M. de La Fayette was the first person of recognized distinction who had arrived in France from America since the declaration of war and the formation of the alliance. He was at the same time a French nobleman and an American officer in whom the ministers placed entire confidence; and his arrival offered them, in consequence, a rare and much desired opportunity to discuss the questions relating to France, to England, and to America, as they were viewed from the other side of the world.

He arrived at Brest on the 12th of February, 1779,

after a voyage which was not so long as usual, especially in the winter time, though it was stormy and rough and was marked by what probably was an exceedingly narrow escape for La Fayette. A conspiracy was formed among the crew of the Alliance, who had been, it will be remembered, for the most part picked up at the last moment among the British deserters and other adventurers in the port of Boston, to seize the vessel and take her into some British port, where they should sell her, under the proclamation of King George, as a *rebel*, and enrich themselves with the proceeds. Their plan was, to cry "Sail!" from aloft at a given moment when all should be ready, and as soon as the officers of the ship and the passengers should come on deck, as they naturally would do under the circumstances, to sweep them away by the fire of four pieces of cannon arranged for the purpose and put under the charge of a mutinous gunner.

This plot was to be carried out at four o'clock in the morning of a certain day, but for some reason it was postponed until four o'clock in the afternoon; which probably saved the lives of La Fayette and those of his companions who had been condemned. During the day an American who had been mistaken by the conspirators for a foreigner, and had been admitted into the plot, disclosed the conspiracy to the captain of the Alliance. La Fayette with the officers of the ship and those of the sailors who remained true to them (he says that there was not a Frenchman nor an American among the conspirators[1]) summoned the crew upon deck and put thirty-three of them in irons, after which the voyage was a safe one; and a week later the vessel entered the harbor of Brest. His heart was full to overflowing at the sight of his country; he had had no news from his family for eight months, and he longed to hasten to them.

[1] Mémoires de ma Main, i. 64.

"I could not but recall the attitude of my country," he says, "of America, and my own situation, at the time when I went away, as I saw the port of Brest recognize and salute the flag that was now flying on my frigate."

The news of La Fayette's triumphant return preceded him from Brest to Versailles, whither he went immediately upon landing, to join his family. The desire to see him was very great; and among those who first met and conversed with him were the Comte de Maurepas, the chief of the King's ministers, by whom he was summoned to a private interview, and M. de Vergennes. He was interrogated and consulted as one who could speak with authority upon questions which concerned the foreign policy of the kingdom, and became at once a factor in the relations between France and America,—as he afterward said of himself, "the link that bound the two countries together." It is not too much to say that throughout the year 1779 the enthusiasm of La Fayette and his ceaseless representations in our behalf before the Cabinet and the King kept the cause of the American Revolution alive in France. He performed, during the period upon which he was then entering, inestimable services for the people of the United States; the greatest, indeed, that he rendered to us during his career, and of such importance that without them it is difficult, in the light of subsequent events, to imagine how America could have achieved its independence. The work which La Fayette did afterward in this country, in the campaigns of Virginia and on the field of battle, does honor to his name; but it was not indispensable, because other men would have been found to do it if he had not been present. It was different at Versailles, for no one else could have taken his place there. He brought together and set in operation all the forces that could be exerted in our favor; he filled men's minds with his own enthusiasm; he intensified the hatred of his country-

men for England; he invoked the glory of France; he appealed to the most effective impulses of his people, always with one object in view,—to send help to America. "In the midst of the whirl of excitement by which I was carried along," said he, "I never lost sight of our revolution, the success of which still seemed to me to be extremely uncertain: accustomed as I was to seeing great purposes accomplished with slender means, I used to say to myself that the cost of a single fête would have equipped the army of the United States; and in order to provide clothes for them I should gladly have stripped the palace of Versailles, as M. de Maurepas had already said."[1]

He was presented immediately upon his arrival, by the Prince de Poix, to all the members of the King's Cabinet; and, like a thorough Frenchman, he remarks, "I had the honor of being consulted by all the ministers, and, what was a great deal better, of being kissed by all the women." No doubt he was the idol of the moment, and the triumph he enjoyed was exceedingly grateful.

In the midst of it all, he was reminded, however, that he had been disobedient to the King, and that he must consider himself under arrest until His Majesty's pleasure should be known; he was forbidden to show himself publicly in Versailles, and, for the present, was sent to the hôtel de Noailles, the residence in Paris of his father-in-law, the Duc d'Ayen, which he was to consider his prison; but, before he went away from the Court, the young and beautiful Queen, Marie Antoinette, who shared the lively interest of her companions in the now famous American general, whom she had known before he left France, expressed a wish to see him and to talk with him. As the Queen could not receive openly a subject who was still unforgiven for his transgression, a method was devised by which he might present himself before her,

[1] Mémoires de ma Main, i. 65.

and La Fayette found occasion to be walking in the gardens of the palace when she drove out. A few days later, having written to the King to ask forgiveness, he was kindly received by the monarch, who gave him his liberty with a "réprimande douce," and admonished him to avoid public resorts where his disobedience might become the subject of compliment. During the week that he was confined to the hôtel de Noailles he met a great many of his friends, who went there to see him under pretence of calling upon the duke's family: so that his exile was not accompanied by a great degree of privation. At the interview with the King, Louis XVI. spoke to him with the most kindly interest, asking him many questions about America and its people, as well as discussing with him the progress of the war, ending by congratulating La Fayette upon his success, and by referring with special gratification to the good name he had won by his exploits.

Only two days after his arrival in France, La Fayette wrote to the Comte de Vergennes a letter which shows how his interest in American affairs absorbed him, even in these first moments of triumph and congratulation: it was after he had been placed under arrest, and evidently was written at Paris just after he had gone there from Versailles in compliance with the orders given him:[1]

"14 February, 1779.

"SIR,—My wish to obey the orders of the King with the most exact promptness causes me to take the liberty of importuning you, in order that I may the better understand my duty. The prohibition which M. le M^{al} de Noailles has put upon me makes no exception in favor of a man from whom I still cannot believe that I shall be forbidden to receive a visit. Dr. Franklin was to have met me at Versailles this morning, if I had been there, to communicate to me some matters which he says are important. I sent word to him of the reasons that detain me in Paris, but I did not think myself bound to decline a conversation which may

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 285; B. F. Stevens's Facsimiles of MSS., vol. xvii. No. 1601.

perhaps not be entirely useless in the service of the King. He is coming to-morrow morning, and I hope that you will add to your other acts of kindness that of instructing me what my conduct ought to be in this connection.

"Allow me to inform you, sir, that I have heard several persons speak of an expedition which has certain points of resemblance to the plan proposed by Congress. I venture to flatter myself that I am not so little known to you as that you should believe that any bond of kindred or friendship could make me forget the profound secrecy which is due to everything that relates to questions of state. I have had a certain practice, added to my own natural disposition, in these matters. My only reason for speaking of this subject to you is, therefore, to add that the indiscretion of several members of Congress, and of numbers of officers coming back from America, is sure to spread reports that it will be impossible to suppress, and the truth can remain concealed only by being covered up under the mass of false reports; this is the only way we had in America of keeping our secrets, in view of certain disadvantages there, which arise from defects in the form of government and from the character of some of the people who are managing its affairs."

It is not clear to what expedition this letter to the Secretary of State refers; though probably it had in view a plan that La Fayette was then considering, of an armed attack upon some of the seaports of Great Britain in connection with the celebrated Captain John Paul Jones. He had conceived the idea of raising money for America by an expedition made up of two or three frigates and about fifteen hundred men, sailing under the American flag, with which descents might be made upon the coasts of England and contributions levied upon the more prosperous towns, such as Bristol and Liverpool. Paul Jones was to command the ships and La Fayette the land forces, and the proceeds of their undertaking were to be sent to the United States to help equip and clothe the army. The plan was nearly ready for execution, when, owing to the length of time that had been occupied in preparing the ships, it was abandoned in favor of a larger enterprise, by which it was intended to make a descent

upon England with the combined forces of France and Spain. Captain Paul Jones put to sea with his vessels, however; and in the course of his cruise he fought the celebrated engagement, on the 23d of September, 1779, between the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis.[1]

La Fayette was advanced, largely through the favor of the Queen, to the command of a regiment in the French army, and was given the King's Dragoons, stationed at that time at Saintes, whither he went, on the 23d of May, to assume the duties of his office. During the interval between his arrival from America and that time, through the months of March and April and the first half of May, whilst he was in Paris and at Versailles, he had begun to establish the relations with M. de Vergennes which led to a close friendship between them. We shall see this friendship growing into an intimacy which becomes more and more evident from their correspondence, and through which La Fayette was enabled to proceed, step by step, in the direction in which his anxious longings carried him, —toward a second expedition of French ships and French soldiers to America.

The disagreements and misunderstandings which had arisen between the Americans and their allies during the expedition of the Comte d'Estaing, especially at the siege of Newport, had somewhat dampened the enthusiasm with which the operations of a combined force had been hailed at the outset in the United States, and the feeling had spread throughout the country that the difference of sentiment and the variations of association and habit between the two races were so great that French troops and Americans could not be expected to operate together harmoniously under a joint command. La Fayette had not been

[1] La Fayette to the Comte de Vergennes: Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 290; Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 546; Franklin's Familiar Letters, pp. 166, 168; Franklin to Paul Jones, 27th April, 1779, and La Fayette to Paul Jones, 22d May, 1779: Sparks, Works of Franklin, viii. 337–338.

encouraged, upon his departure from America, to ask for more troops from France; he had even been warned not to propose any plan which involved the presence of auxiliaries, because the popular prejudice against foreigners was so strong that such an undertaking would be more likely to lead to discontent and disappointment than to do good.[1] This admonition did not shake his purpose, however. He judged, from what he knew of the progress of the war, that the United States would need effectual aid in contending against the redoubled energies of Great Britain, if they hoped to succeed; and he concluded that, by the time a reasonably strong force could be prepared and equipped, Congress would be glad of its presence, especially if it arrived at a critical moment and could be used to produce a happy result. Fortune seemed to indulge La Fayette extraordinarily, at this period of his life, by throwing within his reach the opportunity which he required to attain his purposes. It had brought him the favor of the King, an extraordinary prestige among his countrymen, whose admiration made him the hero of the hour, and, what proved to be of greatest service to him, the confidence of the ministry, and especially the friendly attachment of the Comte de Vergennes. He possessed a remarkable faculty for recognizing advantages of this kind when they offered themselves. He seized the present one and held to it with the tenacity of purpose which had carried him through in his first attempt to go to America and had made the success of his career.

We find him on the 23d of May in close communication with the Secretary of State, and writing to M. de Vergennes upon the subject of a rebellion in Ireland in a manner which shows that he had been admitted into the discussion of very confidential matters of Government

[1] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 257.

policy. The question of weakening England in the course of an offensive war, by fomenting a disturbance among her Irish subjects, was one that had previously received the attention of the two Cabinets of France and Spain, and it had been lately reopened by the Conde de Floridablanca, the Spanish Premier, in a communication addressed to the French Minister of State. The task of finding an emissary who might safely be sent to Ireland upon this business was allotted to the Marquis de La Fayette. An American was preferred, if a suitable man could be found, who should "energetically describe to the Irish what America had done to release herself from oppression, and who should express to them the great wish that she had to see them free also."[1]

Edward Bancroft, who had been somewhat known to M. de La Fayette through his connection with Silas Deane in former days, appeared to be such a person, and La Fayette wrote to M. de Vergennes,[2]—

"PARIS, 23 May, 1779.

"SIR,—According to our conversation upon the subject of the disturbances in Ireland, I have omitted nothing in order to carry out your ideas, and I trust I have completely succeeded. None of the Americans who are now in Paris (except Mr. Bancroft) is sufficiently worthy of our confidence to be intrusted with a mission of this kind. But I have induced him to run the risks of the undertaking; and his intelligence, in addition to his honesty, makes me feel it to be a great piece of good fortune that he is willing to take up this part. He will present his respects to you to-morrow or the next day, and on Wednesday he will set out from Paris on his way to Calais. The passport which you will give him, of an English merchant, one who is even slightly under suspicion, will answer to go to Dover with; he will travel through England in the same disguise, and he will sail from Liverpool to go to Dublin, to Londonderry, and to other important points. It

[1] Despatch of the Comte de Vergennes, 29th May, 1779; Espagne, t. 594, No. 72: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 232.

[2] Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 172 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 288.

would be a great mistake to rely only upon the Catholics in Ireland; we shall be able to use them through the influence of the priests after the revolution has broken out; but that must be begun by the Presbyterians of the four counties of Down, Antrim, Derry, and Donegal, all of which are the friends of liberty, very favorable to the United States, and, by their situation, especially Londonderry, will be easy to assist.

"I have advised Dr. Bancroft to begin very gently with the Irish; to leave out of sight at first all suggestions of independence, and to talk to them only of redressing their grievances, of bringing the English Government back to reason. I have told him to make much of the interest of America, of the disinterestedness of France, and to confide only in a few people among those who are likely to influence others; in a word, to incur no obligations, but to proceed slowly and with great caution.

"Dr. Franklin, to whom I was obliged to say a word or two in order to secure Mr. Bancroft, proposed to me to send him over by way of Ostend, where he would meet a violent member of the opposition in the Irish Parliament. But, aside from the fact that I distrust these fine talkers [*beaux discurs*] and these parliamentarian virtues, I am too fearful of exposing our traveller, and I told Dr. Franklin that he might sound the disposition of his member of Parliament in a vague letter that should give him no definite idea. I would add that, as this negotiation must be a very confidential one, the secret ought to remain with you, with M. le Comte de Maurepas, and with me; and I have told the Doctor only as much of it as was absolutely necessary.

"I am expecting every day three Americans and one Frenchman who would be of the greatest service to us, and I enclose you their names, in order that M. de Sartine may send word to all the ports that upon their arrival they shall be directed to come to me at Saintes.[1]

"I consider the prompt departure of Mr. Bancroft all the more important because Irish affairs appear likely to take a decided turn before long. I shall have the honor of seeing you this evening, Monsieur le Comte, before the Council, and I beg you to intimate the hour to me. We shall decide when Mr. Bancroft shall

[1] The Americans and the Frenchman here referred to were "Mr. Erskine, a merchant of Boston, Colonel Stuard, commanding a Pennsylvania regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Nevill, aide-de-camp to M. de La Fayette and officer in a Virginia regiment, and the Chevalier de la Colombe." (Archives des Affaires étrangères; Etats-Unis, t. 8, No. 63, fol. 171. See Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1604.)

go to receive your orders; and I think it important for you to see him, provided my duty to join the King's Regiment prevents me from continuing this negotiation. I have the honor to be, with a respect equal to my attachment, Monsieur le Comte, your very humble and obedient servant,

"LAFAYETTE."

The report made by Edward Bancroft, who went to Ireland accordingly, and who returned to Paris about the 1st of July, was not favorable: "the fruit was not ripe." M. de Vergennes informed the Spanish Court that the man whom he had sent to Ireland had come back and had made his report in writing, which was verified by information obtained from other sources, so that he could rely upon the accuracy of its statements, but that the condition of that country was very far from what he had hoped to find it: the Irish were discontented, but they were not ready to undertake a revolution, and if they were to take up arms it would not be against the home Government, but against any form of foreign invasion.

In the mean time, La Fayette had joined his regiment at Saintes; and he wrote to the Comte de Vergennes, on the 1st of June, that, under the new quartering of the army, he had removed to Saint-Jean-d'Angély, near Rochefort, where his quarters then were; adding that, if he were needed for any important purpose, a communication would reach him at that place if it were sent through the postmaster at Niort. He did not expect to remain very long in the performance of mere garrison duty, for he was incessantly urging the ministers to undertake an expedition against Great Britain by way of the English Channel, in which he hoped to obtain an important command, though he could not, of course, expect to have the leadership, as his rank would not permit it. He had this expedition in view when he came home from America, and, as time wore on without realizing his hopes, he grew more and more impatient: his correspondence with the

Comte de Vergennes shows how eager he was to hasten the movements of the Departments of War and of the Navy, all too slow for his ardent temperament and his love of action.

"Everything re-echoes the sound of an expedition, Monsieur le Comte," he wrote,[1] "and I, who perhaps have known more about it than a good many people who pretend to be in the secret, see my conjectures substantially justified. But still I am not sent for! Since I count somewhat upon my star, and, for that matter, as I always look upon the bright side, I judge from this silence that everything is not quite ready. But in the mean time, Monsieur le Comte, I should not be frank with you if I did not admit that my blood is boiling a little in my veins. My imagination often goes out into the enemy's country at the head of an advanced guard or a separate corps of grenadiers, dragoons, and chasseurs. You may consider me rather ardent, perhaps, but, since you are kind enough to be my friend, remember that I passionately love the profession of war, that I feel myself especially made to play at that game, that I have been spoiled during the last two years by the habit of having large commands and of enjoying great confidence; remember that I am anxious to justify the benefits that my native country has heaped upon me; remember that I adore that native country, that the thought of seeing England crushed and humiliated makes me tremble with delight; remember that I am especially honored by the interest of my fellow-citizens and by the hatred of our enemies; after all this, Monsieur le Comte (which, by the way, I should not say to you if I were addressing you as the King's minister), judge if I ought not to be impatient to know whether I am destined to be the first man to step upon that shore and to plant the first French flag in the midst of that insolent nation."

The fear of being overlooked breaks through the very slight covering which he threw over it when he appealed to the King's minister, not as an officer, but as a friend; and he confesses his intense desire not only to be joined to the expedition, but to have a command of such importance as his rank will permit,—which he evidently felt

[1] From St.-Jean-d'Angély, 10th June, 1779; Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 182 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 291.

he could safely apply for by reason of the kind disposition manifested toward him by the Secretary of State after his return home. The letter continues:

"If anything is to be done, Monsieur le Comte, I beg you to remind M. le Comte de Maurepas of the intention he expressed to employ me in some rather important place. My habit of occupying such a position would make me less new to it than to any other kind of service. A detachment of two thousand men, although that is not the third of several of my American commands, is no doubt all that he could give me with my rank of colonel; and examples of a greater number of men are very rare. If he will not give me as many as that, I shall accept any number down to fifty inclusive; all I ask is that they shall be picked men, and shall be more exposed than any others.

"If there is to be an expedition in England, I believe that a certain familiarity, not only with the English language, but with the customs and the laws of the country, as well as their application, would secure for me some little place in the confidence of the ministry. But in that event it would be necessary to inform me in advance; because four days to send me word, four days for me to reach there, and four more for me to go thence aboard ship, would make nearly two weeks; without counting the time I should spend in Paris. The news of a despatch just arrived from America would be an excellent excuse for my recall.

"I earnestly desire that, if I am employed, M. de Gimat, whom I caused to be intrusted with the details of the detachment of L'Orient, shall be sent with me, and I beg you to assist me in having that done."

Approaching then the question of the policy of the Cabinet, which he evidently was in the habit of discussing freely with the minister during their personal interviews at Versailles, he turns toward the subject of peace with Great Britain; never omitting, however, the claims and interests of America:

"Whilst people are talking, upon the one hand, of expeditions, on the other they say that you are about to make a peace of rather moderate advantage. Surely it must be the enemies of the present ministry who spread such reports. When I hear them,

I recall for my consolation what you told me at Versailles, and I break a few lances for the glory of our future peace.

"The independence of America, including Canada; the permanent restoration of the port of Dunkerque; liberty to have as many seaports and as many ships as we see fit, are the articles of first importance. But I hope we shall add others to these, damaging to England, humiliating, if possible, and that she may be placed, once for all, in a position of mediocrity.

"Others of your friends say that you are going to make a truce for six years. During that time England would recover her strength, would make alliances, would renew her relations with America, and would break the truce whenever her interests led her to do so. Therefore I do not believe these reports that I hear. For God's sake, let us beat them well this time; let us have courage to wish to be feared, and then we can consider the subject of a peace which shall be an honorable one.

"I fancy at times that before making an expedition you will wait to hear from a certain Doctor.[1] Could you tell me enough of what he says to enable me to judge whether the projects are near at hand or remote; at least whether the little expedition against Liverpool and White Haven will be carried out? At all events, I hope they will not send off there the officer whom I have asked to have with me. Adieu, Monsieur le Comte; pardon me for disturbing you in this manner; you gave me permission to do so, and I give myself permission to have entire confidence in you, united with the most tender and respectful attachment.

"LAFAYETTE.

"I shall not dare to send all these details to M. de Montbarrey,[2] because, as he is in his relations to me the King's minister, I can make only the most general offer of my services, and I trust it will have been enough for me to speak of my zeal upon a former occasion."

In the same tone of confidential intercourse in which at this period La Fayette opened his mind to the Secretary of State and laid before him the projects which occurred to him from his incessant watchfulness for opportunities to forward his aims, he continued to write to him about

[1] Edward Bancroft, then in Ireland.

[2] Secretary of War.

America, to keep freshly before him the important purpose of aiding France by strengthening the "common cause." In these suggestions he showed clearly that he was not only ready to solicit aid for the United States from out of the resources of the Cabinet of France, but was prepared to devote his personal energies to that end at any moment, and, if necessary, his private fortune. The obvious weaknesses of the American Congress in the year 1779 were its inability to carry out any project which required naval force, by reason of its lack of ships, and its poverty, which made it impossible to procure them. Great Britain's policy had been, from the outset, to keep a large fleet of armed vessels in American waters during the war, and it was acknowledged on all hands that ultimate success in the struggle would depend largely upon the naval superiority of one side or the other at the decisive moment. The French Cabinet was not inclined to detach any of its own ships from service which the declaration of war with Great Britain had rendered necessary, especially in the English Channel and on the coasts of France, as well as in the cruises off the West Indies. It was evident that nothing could be expected from the King's Government at the present moment, whatever it might be induced to do subsequently. In the mean time, however, it was very important for America to have ships, and La Fayette hit upon a plan which, although it was not carried out, proves his activity in our behalf, and, what is most worthy of notice in this connection, his readiness to guarantee the transaction to the extent of his own private means, if he could succeed in procuring them for us.

Whilst he was still in Paris, before he went to join his regiment, he wrote the following letter to the Comte de Vergennes:[1]

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 293; Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1603.

"PARIS, 26 April, 1779.

"SIR,—Permit me to have the honor of submitting to you an idea the success of which, uncertain as it still is, will depend perhaps upon your approval. As our means of attack and defence are based upon our naval forces, would it not be rendering a service to the common cause if we should increase, for a time, those of our allies? To buy ships would be too expensive for a nation as destitute of money as they are. We should attain the desired object by hiring ships for them, and this would place us in a situation to follow out certain diversions and to undertake certain operations of which I believe, according to my feeble lights, I see the necessity.

"Do you not think, Monsieur le Comte, that if, without weakening too much his little fleet of observation, the King of Sweden were to lend America four ships of the line with the half of their crews, which the United States should agree to return in one year upon certain conditions, the transaction might be advantageous to us? The ships would come to us under the Swedish flag, and France would not be involved in any manner. We should purchase them in the port, we should put them under the command of officers temporarily appointed [*officiers bleus*], and they would hoist the American flag when they went out.

"It will merely be necessary to ascertain whether France will undertake to guarantee a certain sum for the hire of them, and to give assistance in completing the equipment; and, indeed, if there should be any trouble about the first point, the Government would be called upon to bind itself only so far as the required sum should exceed my own fortune.

"I have not as yet spoken of this project to Dr. Franklin, but I have sounded the Swedish Ambassador, with whom I was very much pleased. He asked to have a letter written to him which he might send to his King, and when I saw that this sudden inspiration was likely to lead to results, I hastened to confide it to you and to ask for your instruction.

"The Swedish Ambassador says that the ships would be here in two months and a half; consequently, if the rest of the armament were got ready, the whole might be at sea in the month of August, and might reach Rhode Island, the Bermudas, or any other place in America, in the month of October, during which the weather is still fairly good.

"It would be necessary in that case, Monsieur le Comte, for Dr. Franklin to send out a trusty man, or, what would be better, for you, should you be good enough to do so, to furnish him one upon

whom he could rely. The proposed contract contains some engagements, and especially some commercial expectations, which may lessen the amount of money that will have to be spent.

"I beg you to inform me, Monsieur le Comte, whether this little romance presents any objections, and whether I ought to go on with my proposition or to withdraw from it.

"I have the honor to be, with a respect which is equal to my attachment,

"Sir,

"Your very humble and very obedient servant,

"LAFAYETTE.

"If, whilst we are completing the Swedish negotiation, the contributions from England should produce anything, I shall still be able to revive a favorite scheme."

We have not the reply which M. de Vergennes made to this letter; though, as the plan was not carried out, the chances are that he did not greatly favor it, and that he was satisfied to have La Fayette await the development of events which were then beginning to take shape in France in connection with the projected attack upon England. It was to be expected, if that plan were successful, that it would occupy the entire attention of the Cabinet and employ all the energies of La Fayette.

But immediately upon his arrival at his post at St.-Jean-d'Angély, where his regiment was stationed, we find him writing to the secretary in favor of the United States,—this time in connection with a possible loan:[1]

"I learned before my departure from Paris that a loan which was being negotiated in Holland for England, and which was to be completed next autumn, was stopped because the lenders had demanded one per cent. more interest. This loan was negotiated by a banker of English origin who had apportioned it among several persons and had become the fiscal agent of the English government. I was told that a certain additional profit,

[1] Letter to M. de Vergennes, 1st June, 1779: Archives des Affaires étrangères, Etats-Unis, t. 8, No. 88, fol. 221; Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1605. And see Sparks, Writings of Washington, vi. 548.

beyond the commissions, would secure this sum, which amounts to more than forty millions,[1] for America. I suggested this idea to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, to be communicated to you; but at the same time, whilst I was fulfilling my duty toward the Americans, I feared that M. Necker would not share my enthusiasm. I had already designed to use twenty millions of it to strengthen the paper money, ten to bear the cost of an expedition, and ten to pay interest until a general settlement of accounts."

We find him a short time later writing from the same place to Congress to inform them of his own movements and of the general aspect of affairs in Europe, quite in the character of a representative making a report to his principals; a colonel in the French army sending to America whatever encouraging news he has been able to find, and manifesting such evidences of affectionate interest in the national cause as an American might have done in writing home. The King of France had appointed the Chevalier de La Luzerne to be his minister in the United States, in place of M. Gérard de Rayneval, whose health had failed in the climate of Philadelphia, and who had been obliged to ask for his recall; and upon M. de La Luzerne's departure from France La Fayette sent by him the following letter to the President of Congress:[2]

"St.-Jean-d'Angély, near Rochefort, June 12, 1779.

"Sir,—How happy I shall think myself whenever a safe opportunity of writing to congress is offered, I cannot in any way better express than in reminding them of that unbounded affection and gratitude which I shall ever feel for them. So deeply are those sentiments engraven on my heart, that I every day lament the distance which separates me from them, and that nothing was ever so warmly and passionately wished for, as to return again to that country of which I shall ever consider myself as a citizen; there is no pleasure to be enjoyed which could equal this, of finding myself among that free and liberal nation, by whose affection and confidence I am so highly honoured; to fight

[1] Livres tournois.

[2] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 286.

again with those brother soldiers of mine to whom I am so much indebted. But congress knows that former plans have been altered by themselves, that others have been thought impossible, as they were asked too late in the year.[1] I will therefore make use of the leave of absence they were pleased to grant me, and serve the common cause among my countrymen, their allies, until happy circumstances may conduct me to the American shores, in such a way as would make that return more useful to the United States.

"The affairs of America I shall ever look upon as my first business whilst I am in Europe. Any confidence from the king and ministers, any popularity I may have among my own countrymen, any means in my power, shall be, to the best of my skill, and till the end of my life, exerted in behalf of an interest I have so much at heart. What I have hitherto done or said relating to America, I think needless to mention, as my ardent zeal for her is, I hope, well known to congress; but I wish to let them know that if in my proposals, and in my repeated urgent representations for getting ships, money, and support of any kind, I have not always found the ministry so much in earnest as I was myself, they only opposed to me the *natural fears* of inconveniences which might arise to both countries, or the conviction that such a thing was impossible for the present; but I never could question their good will towards America. If congress believe that my influence may serve them, in any way, I beg they will direct such orders to me, that I may the more certainly and properly employ the knowledge I have of this court and country for obtaining a success in which my heart is so much interested.

"His excellency, Dr. Franklin, will no doubt inform you, sir, of the situation of Europe, and the respective state of our affairs. The Chevalier de la Luzerne will also add thereto the intelligence which will be entrusted to him at the time of his departure. By the doctor you will learn what has been said or thought on account of finances. Germany, Prussia, Turkey, and Russia, have made such a peace as the French have desired. All the northern kingdoms, the Dutch themselves, seem rather disgusted with English pride and vexations; they put themselves in a situation to protect their trade of every kind with France. Irish intelligence you will be fully and particularly acquainted of. What concerns Spain will also be laid before you; so that I have nothing to add but to tell you that our affairs seem going

[1] The expedition to Canada.

very fast towards a speedy and honourable end. England is now making her last effort, and I hope that a great stroke will, before long, abate their fantastic, swollen appearance, and shew the narrow bounds of their actual power.

"Since we have taken Senegal I don't know of any military event which I can mention. There has been a privateering expedition against Jersey Island, which has been stopped by the difficulty of getting ashore. That little attempt, made by some few private volunteers, England honoured with the name of a public French expedition, and very unwisely employed there Admiral Arbuthnot, which will interpose a great delay to his reported departure. Congress will hear of an expedition against our friends of Liverpool and other parts of the English coast; to show there French troops under American colours, which, on account of raising contributions, my concern for American finances had at length brought into my head. But the plan was afterwards reduced to so small a scale that they thought the command would not suit me, and the expedition itself has been delayed until more important operations take place. There I hope to be employed, and if anything important should be the matter, I shall, as a faithful American officer, give an accurate account thereof to congress and General Washington.

"The so flattering affection which congress and the American nation are pleased to honour me with, makes me very desirous of letting them know, if I dare speak so friendly, how I enjoyed my private situation. Happy in the sight of my friends and family, after I was, by your attentive goodness, safely brought again to my native shore, I met there with such an honourable reception, with such kind sentiments, as by far exceeded any wishes I durst have conceived; I am indebted for that inexpressible satisfaction which the good will of my countrymen towards me affords to my heart, to their ardent love for America, to the cause of freedom and its defenders, their new allies, and to the idea they entertain that I have had the happiness to serve the United States. To these motives, sir, and to the letter congress was pleased to write on my account, I owe the many favours the king has conferred upon me; there was no time lost in appointing me to the command of his own regiment of dragoons, and everything he could have done, everything I could have wished, I have received on account of your recommendation.

"I have been some days in this small town, near Rochefort harbour, where I have joined the king's regiment, and where other troops are stationed which I for the moment command; but

I hope to leave this place before long, in order to play a more active part and come nearer the common enemy. Before my departure from Paris I sent to the minister of foreign affairs (who, by the bye, is one of our best friends) intelligence concerning a loan in Holland which I want France to make or answer for in behalf of America; but I have not yet heard anything on that head. M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne will give you more explicit and fresher news, as he is particularly ordered to do so, and he sets out directly from Versailles. That new minister plenipotentiary I beg leave to recommend most earnestly to congress, not only as a public man, but also as a private gentleman. From the acquaintance I have made with him, I conceive he is a sensible, modest, well-meaning man; a man truly worthy of enjoying the spectacle of American freedom. I hope that by his good qualities and his talents, he will obtain both public confidence and private friendship.

"Wherever the interests of beloved friends are seriously concerned, candid and warm affection knows not how to calculate, and throws away all considerations. I will frankly tell you, sir, that nothing can more effectually hurt our interests, consequence, and reputation, in Europe, than to hear of disputes or divisions between the whigs. Nothing could urge my touching upon this delicate matter but the unhappy experience of every day on that head, since I can hear, myself, what is said on this side of the Atlantic, and the arguments I have to combat with.

"Let me, sir, finish this long letter, by begging you will present once more to the congress of the United States, the tribute of an unbounded zeal and affection, of the highest respect and most sincere gratitude, with which I shall be animated, till the last moment of my life."

On the same day, and upon the same occasion of the new minister's setting out for America, he wrote an interesting letter to General Washington,[1] in which he refers to his activity in our behalf, especially in connection with his efforts to raise money for us, and with the evident consciousness that he has probably pushed his demands to the utmost limit of patient hearing in the financial departments of the Government, where the chief officers of

[1] A copy of the original is printed in the American edition of La Fayette's Correspondence, i. 290.

the Treasury seem no longer to have received his propositions very cordially. "In referring you," he wrote, "to M. le Chevalier de La Luzerne, for what concerns the public news of this time, the present situation of affairs, and the designs of our ministry, I will only speak to your excellency about that great article, money. It gave me much trouble, and I insisted upon it so much, that the director of finances looks upon me as a devil. France has met great expenses lately; those Spaniards will not give their dollars easily. However, Dr. Franklin has got some money to pay the bills of Congress, and I hope I shall determine them to greater sacrifices. Serving America, my dear general, is to my heart an inexpressible happiness."

He addressed General Washington earnestly also upon the subject of the internal dissensions which had made their appearance in Congress and in the country, the outcome of personal jealousies or of the selfish ambition of individuals. He was alarmed lest these domestic quarrels, which probably lost nothing of their disparaging effect by being whispered about, should seriously injure the reputation of Americans in France, and lest they might go far enough to counteract the friendly sentiments which he was industriously fostering in the mind of the Minister of State. He felt that he could appeal to Washington with a freedom which his relations with Congress, as a body, did not permit; and therefore he wrote, "There is another point for which you should employ all your influence and popularity. For God's sake prevent their loudly disputing together. Nothing hurts so much the interest and reputation of America, as to hear of their intestine quarrels. On the other hand, there are two parties in France: MM. Adams and Lee on one part, Doctor Franklin and his friends on the other. So great is the concern which these divisions give me, that I cannot wait on these gentlemen as much as I

could wish, for fear of occasioning disputes and bringing them to a greater collision. That, my dear general, I entrust to your friendship, but I could not help touching upon that string in my letter to congress."

After closing this letter, he added a postscript to it, on the 13th of June: "I have just received, my dear general, an express from court, with orders to repair immediately to Versailles. There I am to meet M. le Comte de Vaux, Lieutenant-General, who is appointed to the command of the troops intended for an expedition. In the army I shall be employed in the capacity of aide-maréchal-général des logis, which is, in our service, a very important and agreeable place; so that I shall serve in the most pleasing manner, and shall be in a situation to know everything and to render services."

The expedition to which La Fayette alluded in this letter was the grand attack intended to be made by the combined forces of France and Spain upon England, for which the French War Department had already concentrated large bodies of troops upon the northern coast, from Havre to St.-Malo, where they were now performing evolutions and making their final preparations for the enterprise. The troops were to embark upon transports which should carry them across the Channel under the convoy of a fleet collected for that purpose, and this fleet was daily expected to arrive, under the Comte d'Orvilliers. The Maréchal de Broglie had at first been given command of the land forces attached to the expedition; but, by reason of a misunderstanding between him and the King's ministers, he was relieved from his duty and the command was transferred to the Comte de Vaux, with whom La Fayette wrote General Washington that he was going to serve as his aide-maréchal-général des logis.[1]

[1] Mémoires militaires, historiques et politiques de Rochambeau, Paris, 1809, i. 232.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH M. DE VERGENNES—EXPEDITION OF THE COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU.

THE Comte de Vaux set out from St.-Jean-d'Angély, accompanied by La Fayette, and proceeded to Versailles, where he received his instructions from the King in person, on the 21st of June.[1] By these he was directed, first, to make a descent upon Gosport; and if he succeeded in that, he was to confine himself afterward to taking possession of the Isle of Wight, upon which he should so strongly intrench himself that the British forces could not dislodge him, for it was intended that his presence there should engage the attention of so large an army upon the southern coast of England that the British would be obliged to weaken their garrisons in other parts of the kingdom, presumably along the coasts to the northward. Having established himself upon the Isle of Wight in such a manner that a force of ten thousand men would be sufficient to hold it against an attack, the Comte de Vaux was to make a descent upon some point in England, in concert with the fleet under M. d'Orvilliers, and at any place lying even as far away as Bristol. The expedition was to set out from St.-Malo upon the arrival there from the south of the fleet under M. d'Orvilliers; and in the mean time the troops were concentrated at Havre, under General Jaucourt, and at St.-Malo, under the Comte de Langeron.

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[1] "Instruction remise à Monsieur le Comte de Vaux d'après le Comitté tenu chés Monsieur le Comte de Maurepas," Archives de la Marine, B[4] 159, fol. 259: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 294.

La Fayette had reached Havre on the 1st of July, whence he renewed immediately his correspondence with M. de Vergennes, which from this time forward increased greatly in volume, the interchange of letters becoming of almost daily occurrence. He was extremely hopeful of the results that France was likely to attain from the projected expedition across the Channel, and, whilst he expressed his interest in the events that were going on about him, and in the possibility of attacking Great Britain through Ireland, he invariably came back to the subject which he had uppermost in mind and which he never ceased to discuss with the minister,—namely, the possibility of doing something for America.[1]

"HAVRE, 1 July, 1779.

"Here I am at Havre, Monsieur le Comte, opposite the port and overlooking the vessels which are to carry us to England. Imagine how happy I am in my situation and how my heart longs for the southerly wind that shall bring M. d'Orvilliers to us. I shall not be satisfied until we are upon the shore of England; and we are not there yet.

"I have found M. de Jaucourt, Monsieur le Comte, to be all that you described him to be, and he is a very agreeable chief to have. He is occupied at this moment with the plans for our departure, and somewhat with those of our landing. M. de Vaux appears not to have lost the habit of discipline, with which I am delighted; for, having been a major-general also, in my youth, I have always found that without discipline it is exceedingly difficult to conduct a large body of troops; and I consider it particularly necessary in the young army and the new expedition which have been intrusted to M. de Vaux.

"As I was coming away, Monsieur le Comte, I saw Dr. B., and by what he could tell me in two minutes I learned that the fruit is not ripe. If the English ministry continue to make mistakes in their domestic policy, and if the war is not ended this winter, we shall find the revolution at a more advanced stage for the next campaign. But, in order to excite the temper of the people, if I

[1] Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 183 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 293.

had a few trusty Americans I should propose to you to send them there next autumn.

"Dr. Bancroft thinks that, with two thousand men, any one who knows the country and understands the language could take and destroy the city of Cork. He urged me to take up this proposition at once, but I shall be satisfied if it is brought to the attention of the Cabinet, and I prefer to await its decision.

"I shall write to Congress, Monsieur le Comte, on the anniversary of independence, and I shall mention the new propositions of England. I shall have the honor of submitting my letter to you. I believe that a declaration from Spain and some open act in favor of the Americans, a Spanish frigate, for instance, sent with an address that could be published, would have a good effect in the United States; and some piasters would have a better one still."

Whilst La Fayette was in Paris, on his road to Havre, he had a confidential interview with M. de Vergennes, during which he freely discussed with the King's minister the progress of the war; and there is no doubt that he presented in detail upon this occasion the subject of forming an expedition to the United States which he and the Comte de Vergennes had entertained at several previous meetings, and which La Fayette now treated as the prime object that he had in view during his present visit to France. M. de Vergennes had caught some of the fire with which La Fayette seems to have enkindled the interest of people with whom he came in contact; and when the young aide-maréchal-général des logis went off with M. de Vaux to join the troops in Normandy, he left the King's minister substantially convinced that France ought to accede to his desires and send out her troops to help General Washington.

We find that La Fayette had risen to a situation of extraordinary influence with the Cabinet, and we see him now occupying the position of a confidential adviser of the Crown. His duties obliged him, of course, to follow the commander of the expedition and to report at Havre; but before he took his leave at Versailles the Comte de

Vergennes had asked him to prepare a memoir upon the subject of a possible expedition to be sent out to America. Three days after his arrival at Havre he was already writing to M. de Vergennes,[1]—

"The plan for which you asked me in regard to America, Monsieur le Comte, is so dependent upon present circumstances that I shall do better to wait a few days. If this expedition is carried out, it would be necessary, I think, to start [for America] toward the month of February; but if it is abandoned we should be able to set out earlier. If, as some people say, the English have recalled their vessels from America to re-establish an equality of forces in the Channel, we ought not to lose a moment."

He was beginning even then to fear that the plan for a descent upon England might fail altogether, or that it might dwindle to an enterprise of insignificant proportions. M. d'Orvilliers did not arrive with his fleet, although he was expected every day, especially when the south wind was blowing, and there were so many obstacles to be overcome before the army could be landed in England that La Fayette had very truly said, "We are not there yet." His misgivings increased as he reflected upon the situation, and he added, in his letter of the 3d of July to M. de Vergennes, "I am not yet able to feel certain of the expedition. I should be all the more disappointed because I should fear that peace would be made next winter, before we had put England where it would be impossible for her to avenge herself for a long time. But it would distress me no less to see all these great preparations end in a small operation. It is true that we still have two months, and if these are advantageously employed they will be very useful to us."

In the mean time, with his accustomed activity of mind, he was preparing the suggestions as to an expedition

[1] Letter of the 3d July, 1779; Archives des Affaires étrangères, Etats-Unis, t. 9, No. 2, fol. 9: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1607.

to America for which M. de Vergennes had asked, and he sent his statement, which he called "quelques idées," to the Secretary of State on the 18th of July. It is a remarkably well matured plan, to the construction of which he brought all his acquaintance with the resources, the geography, the seasons, the nature of the country, and the people themselves, in America, as well as the experience he had acquired by his services in the Continental army. This document, which has been published and translated[1] and the original of which is still preserved in the Archives of France,[2] is one of great importance in the history of our country, and it had a far-reaching influence upon the destinies of the United States. It was the culminating point of La Fayette's intercession, as it was the embodiment of his sentiments of friendship and of gratitude toward us shown by his unalterable purpose to help us. It represents, beyond doubt, his greatest service to America. It was the starting-point of the series of events which led up to the surrender of the British army under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. The memoir was carefully studied by M. de Vergennes, upon whom it made a favorable impression immediately, and it was submitted by him to the Premier, M. de Maurepas, who also approved of the general tenor of the proposition.[3] M. de Vergennes replied in a letter which has not been preserved to us, but of which we have an intimation in one from La Fayette in return, on the 30th of July:[4]

"I have received, Monsieur le Comte, the letter that you were kind enough to write me, in which you promise me another after

[1] See La Fayette's Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits, i., Appendice II.; Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 479; Stevens's Facsimiles of Manuscripts, vol. xvii. No. 1609.

[2] Etats-Unis, t. 9, No. 42, fol. 154.

[3] See a translation of this memoir, Appendix D.

[4] To the Comte de Vergennes from Havre, 30th July, 1779: Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 307; Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1610.

you shall have read my memoir to M. le Comte de Maurepas. It is exceedingly indulgent of you to occupy in replying to me a part of your time which is so valuable. I am awaiting with very great eagerness the letter of which I have your flattering promise. Convinced as I am that there is not a moment to lose in regard to the measures I have proposed, my love for my country has perhaps made me impatient even to importunity. But I feel that you will overlook a fault caused by a sentiment that is dear to every honest citizen. . . .

"Whilst we are waiting to undertake some operations next year in conjunction with a fleet, why should you not throw into Boston three thousand, or even two thousand, men, who, with three hundred dragoons, should be joined next spring by some ships of war and a land force? This detachment might be convoyed by two vessels of fifty guns,—a vessel of the company of the Indies serving as a transport,—Spanish ships if you wish. In order to avoid expense, let them be accompanied by ships bound for the Islands; by an escort of the merchant vessels; by the Bonhomme Richard and all those frigates at L'Orient. We should leave the land forces in America until the next campaign, and these are the results that would probably be produced,—it being understood, of course, that the convoy should proceed to the Islands or to its destination at some other point, after having safely landed the detachment:

"1st. We should restore by our presence the value of the paper money, an important object for the commerce of France.

"2d. We should be in a position to take observations and to make the first advances toward the capture of Halifax.

"3d. Such a detachment *would restore vigor to the* American army; it would form an attacking party for the reconquest of the forts on the North River; and it *would induce the Americans to undertake such enterprises* as circumstances would permit.

"You have asked me, Monsieur le Comte, for *all my ideas*, and it is my duty to present to you this one, which does not appear to me to be open to any objection. At first I was afraid to allow myself to express my opinions, lest I should be suspected of personal motives and inclinations; but now that I feel I am better understood, and that you have my entire confidence, I speak more boldly, and I give you my word of honor that, if the half of my fortune were engaged in sending troops to aid the Americans, I should still feel that I was rendering to my country a service which would far outweigh this sacrifice.

"You will say, perhaps, that this corps would be difficult to

sustain during the winter; but by paying in specie we should find provisions at low rates, and we should not produce a very great effect compared with the population of the country."

In the mean time the season wore on, but the fleet of the Comte d'Orvilliers did not arrive to convoy the expedition to England; the vast expenditure of money that had been made, and the exertions to prepare the troops and to have them at proper points within reach of St.-Malo for embarkation, had all been in vain. When the great French and Spanish fleet came at last into sight at the entrance to the Channel, with more than a hundred ships of the line and frigates, the British squadron had preceded it and was already at Portsmouth. The British Government had long been aware of the hostile demonstration that was making ready in France, and had fully prepared for defence: so that, after two months of waiting and watching, the French leaders were forced to admit that the purposes of their expedition had been defeated, the enemy could no longer be surprised, the intended conquests could not be relied upon, and the whole project of attacking England in that manner must be abandoned, at least for the present. All that La Fayette could say in his disappointment at the failure of an enterprise which had promised glorious results—all, indeed, that it was worth while for anybody to say—was that he had resolved "to grieve in silence."[1] On the 17th of October the army which had been collected under the command of the Comte de Vaux was ordered by the War Department to disperse.

It was during this time, whilst La Fayette was with the troops at Havre, that he received the sword which Congress had ordered Dr. Franklin to have made and to present to him. It had been prepared accordingly, and Dr.

[1] Letter to the Comte de Vergennes, 11th September, 1779; Etats-Unis, t. 10, No. 14, fol. 54: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1615; and see also a letter of the 17th August, to the same, Etats-Unis, t. 9, No. 104, fol. 318: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1614.

Franklin sent it from Passy in charge of his grandson, with the following letter:[1]

"PASSY, 24th August, 1779.

"SIR,—The Congress, sensible of your merit towards the United States, but unable adequately to reward it, determined to present you with a sword, as a small mark of their grateful acknowledgment: they directed it to be ornamented with suitable devices. Some of the principal actions of the war, in which you distinguished yourself by your bravery and conduct, are therefore represented upon it. These, with a few emblematic figures, all admirably well executed, make its principal value. By the help of the exquisite artists of France, I find it easy to express everything but the sense we have of your worth, and our obligations to you; for this, figures, and even words, are found insufficient. I, therefore, only add that, with the most perfect esteem, I have the honour to be,

"B. FRANKLIN.

"P.S. My grandson goes to Havre with the sword, and will have the honour of presenting it to you."

This sword had engraved upon it representations of the principal actions in which La Fayette had taken part up to that time,—Monmouth, Barren Hill, Gloucester, and Rhode Island. Upon one side, America, released from her chains, gave an olive branch to a young warrior; and upon the other, the same warrior was dealing a death-blow to the British lion. Dr. Franklin had added, as a conception of his own, a blazon of America in the form of a crescent moon, with the device, "Crescam et prosim," and beside it the device which La Fayette had adopted upon his own arms at the time when he set out for America: "Cur Non?"[2]

M. de La Fayette received it at Havre, whence he wrote to Dr. Franklin, on the 29th of August,[3]—

"SIR,—Whatever expectations might have been raised from the sense of past favours, the goodness of the United States to me

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 303.

[2] Franklin to the President of Congress, 4th October, 1779: Diplomatic Correspondence, Wharton, iii. 363.

[3] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 303.

has ever been such, that on every occasion it far surpasses any idea I could have conceived. A new proof of that flattering truth I find in the noble present, which congress has been pleased to honour me with, and which is offered in such a manner by your excellency as will exceed everything, but the feelings of an unbounded gratitude.

"In some of the devices I cannot help finding too honourable a reward for those slight services which, in concert with my fellow soldiers, and under the god-like American hero's orders, I had the good fortune to render. The sight of those actions, where I was a witness of American bravery and patriotic spirit, I shall ever enjoy with that pleasure which becomes a heart glowing with love for the nation, and the most ardent zeal for its glory and happiness.

"Assurances of gratitude, which I beg leave to present to your excellency, are much too inadequate to my feelings, and nothing but such sentiments can properly acknowledge your kindness towards me. The polite manner in which Mr. Franklin was pleased to deliver that inestimable sword, lays me under great obligations to him, and demands my particular thanks."

The descent upon England having been definitively abandoned, La Fayette found renewed opportunities, with almost a clear field of action before him, to approach the Cabinet with his projects in favor of an active participation in the war of America. The ministers were now all the more willing to listen to him, because, for the moment, his proposition was the only one that offered a reasonable prospect of continuing hostilities against Great Britain with even moderate success; and, indeed, M. de Vergennes had already disclosed his sentiments in a manner which showed that his mind was fully open to conviction, when he had intimated in a despatch that "it might possibly be found that the decisive blows in the contest were yet to be struck in America rather than in Europe,—that a plan might be devised which should lead to offensive operations against the British, whilst at the same time they should aid in the defence of America."[1]

[1] Comte de Vergennes to M. de Montmorin; Espagne, t. 594, No. 201: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 276.

He had written also to La Fayette that "his plan had produced a favorable impression,"[1] after having been submitted to the head of the Cabinet and having been deliberated upon. It was an invitation to continue the discussion, of which La Fayette was quick to avail himself. We find him writing, in his letter of the 11th of September, to M. de Vergennes that, in view of the various modifications in his statement of the 18th of July which circumstances then made necessary, as well as of the preparations which must be made in advance, even if the expedition were not to set out "until next spring," and, in fact, considering the thousand things which "can be said but cannot be written," a conversation would be exceedingly interesting. He added that, while he had no intention of leaving his post unless he were summoned upon business of the state, and wished the King's minister to look upon his request in that light only, yet, if he would consent to receive him, "an order might recall him for an instant to Paris and procure for him a conversation which in several respects, he thought, might be of some use."

The likelihood of hostility upon the part of the Americans to the proposed landing of another French detachment in their country must be taken into account. Should their dislikes or suspicions be strongly aroused, the expedition would be impossible, for lack of their co-operation. Yet La Fayette assured the Secretary that the Americans would certainly wish eventually for the help he proposed to give them: the point to be considered, unless they should in the mean time voluntarily ask for the expedition, was how to approach Congress upon the subject.

He discussed this with M. de Vergennes in a letter written on the 13th of August:[2]

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[1] "Le projet ayant plu, comme vous me mandés." La Fayette's letter of 11th September, *supra*.

[2] Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 216 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 272.

"What M. Gérard reports to you upon the subject of the army is perfectly accurate. Aside from his confidence in my respected friend,[1] who would be a guarantee of its fidelity, I have always placed an especial reliance upon it, and I told Congress long ago that the best part of American virtue was in that army,—to which, nevertheless, they have given many very just causes of complaint.

"I agree entirely with you, Monsieur le Comte, upon the subject of the want of confidence that we observe in our allies. But the extent to which they must seek our aid before we give it depends upon tact,—and this is the way in which I look at it. It is most important to them, as well as to us, that this aid should be sent. The advantages arising from it are very considerable, in my opinion, for us; but so they are, also, for them; and that is what pleases me infinitely. In that country, and under present circumstances, a small number of troops would produce a greater result, the sooner they were sent out; and the Americans would be glad to make use of them. But if the question were put to the Congress, even if the French minister were to appear there with this in view, those who like us the least might create obstacles, and might induce some of the weaker members to follow them. And, besides this, it is characteristic of the Americans to believe that in three months they will no longer need help of any kind. I know even some good patriots who, in the event of such a demand, would fear to increase the obligations of their country to France. But this fear ought not to restrain us; and, if we undertake an enterprise of this kind, if we manage it with even a reasonable amount of political skill, I am convinced that it can be made to result in unqualified advantage, as well as in a debt of gratitude. More than this, Dr. Franklin wishes it most earnestly, and he would present at this very moment, if he dared to do so, a formal and ministerial request. I do not know, Monsieur le Comte, whether I should find among the people and in the army any especial readiness to put confidence in me, but if the King were to send me out to-morrow with a French detachment (which should not be more than one-third as large as the American army) I should be willing to bind myself to him, by all that I hold dear, not only that the corps would be well received, but that, by being united with the Continental troops, it would render great service. I should ask only for a corvette to precede me by fifteen days with my letters to Congress."

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[1] General Washington.

At the same time, La Fayette was carrying on a correspondence upon this subject with Dr. Franklin. The American minister was not ready as yet to discuss it with a view of making a demand upon the part of the United States for an expedition from France to help them against their enemies; he wrote, in August, that the King's ministers were doing everything for America that was possible under the circumstances which at that moment embarrassed them at home and heavily taxed their resources. He should have liked to ask the French Government for the loan of some money had he felt that he could do so without increasing its burdens; but he confined himself to a request for arms and munitions of war, which Congress had directed him to obtain, and he ventured to express the hope that some ships might be sent out, whenever they could conveniently be spared, to help reduce Rhode Island and New York.[1] It appears to have been La Fayette's aim at this time to persuade Dr. Franklin to take some step to induce a request from Congress for a detachment of French troops,—no doubt with the conviction that, as he had by this time fully prepared the way by his labors in the Council of the King's Cabinet, the success of his plan would be assured if the initiative were to come from the American side. Dr. Franklin, however fully conversant with the popular feeling in America against the introduction of foreign troops, especially since the disappointment at Newport, was unwilling to assume a responsibility which La Fayette's youth and enthusiasm made light of, and he replied that he had as yet had no instructions to ask for troops; that he had, indeed, been directed to obtain subsidies if he could do so, but that he should not dare to go further in regard to such a request without specific orders from home.[2] Nevertheless we find Franklin writing to the President of Congress on

[1] Sparks, Works of Franklin, viii. 379.
[2] Ibid., p. 391.

the 4th of October that a proposition had been made to him in regard to an army corps to be sent to America, by one of the best of the French generals, the Comte de Maillebois, who was also friendly to the American cause; that he had not given him a definite reply because he was not sufficiently informed as to the disposition of Congress toward the introduction of foreign troops, but that he had promised to submit M. de Maillebois's memorandum to Congress, and he therefore enclosed it in his letter.[1] There is good reason to believe that this visit of the Maréchal de Maillebois to Dr. Franklin had been arranged by the French Cabinet as a convenient and effective method of introducing the subject, with all the greater likelihood of a favorable result because that officer was upon a friendly footing at the legation in Passy.[2]

The influence of La Fayette's presence was now making itself openly felt. It remained for him, however, to bring the ministry to the definite consideration of sending a detachment to America; of the troops that should compose it; of the officers who should command it; and of the time and manner of its departure. To this he devoted his attention assiduously during the autumn of 1779, when the dispersion of the army under the Comte de Vaux made it no longer necessary for him to remain at Havre. His movements are distinctly traceable in the documents of the time still preserved in the Archives of France. He appears there, on the 25th of January, 1780,[3] addressing the Prime Minister in a memorandum which presented his reasoning anew, and which met the objections aroused by the former discussion, with the purpose, this time, of bringing the Government to immediate and final action. This was evidently the convincing argu-

[1] Diplomatic Correspondence, Wharton, iii. 364.

[2] Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 276.

[3] Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 239 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 308.

ment; for after it the expedition was assured, and the measures for its equipment were systematically undertaken.[1]

La Fayette's task was now accomplished. His year of absence from the United States had wrought a wonderful change in his circumstances: he had re-established his position at home as a loyal Frenchman and an officer of the King; he had enormously strengthened his position at Court, where he was now looked upon as a man of distinction and of high merit; he had commanded the choice regiment of the King's dragoons as a major-general of the Continental army on leave of absence; he had played an important part, through his relations with the Secretary of State, in shaping the policy of the Government, and had achieved a great success in the adoption by the King's Cabinet of the plans which he had suggested; and now, with a new enthusiasm which filled his mind with bright promise of the future and offered him the joyful prospect of meeting again his former comrades in arms, he turned his face once more toward America.

He had supposed, and perhaps not unnaturally, that the command of the new auxiliary expedition to the United States might be offered to him; and he said so, in spite of his rank of colonel in the French army, and of his extreme youth compared with men to whom it was customary in France to intrust positions of such responsibility. No doubt it was a delicate subject to discuss with him; and it was probably out of consideration for his sensibility in connection with it that he was not admitted at first into the secret of the purpose which the ministry had in view when they decided to carry his suggestions into effect. It was evident, however, that, under the circumstances, the charge of the expedition could not be given to him. But La Fayette was willing to discuss this subject with entire

[1] See a translation of this document, Appendix E.

freedom from personal motives, and, if necessary, to yield, for the success of the enterprise, which was to his mind the purpose to be kept constantly in view, all claims of his own which he might have considered himself justified in presenting. He wrote a letter to the Comte de Vergennes, on the 2d of February, which presents in outline the plan that was finally adopted. Taken in connection with his memoir of the 25th of January to the Comte de Maurepas, with which it ought to be read in order fully to understand the development of the events of which we are now treating, it is a document of great importance to the student of American history, and therefore it is inserted here:[1]

"VERSAILLES, 2 February, 1780.

"You have approved, Monsieur le Comte, of my putting into writing, before I should talk with you about the expedition, a few of the measures to be taken in the two following cases: 1st, in the event that I should command the French detachment; 2d, if I should resume an American division.

"First Supposition. First, This commission is not only military and political, but social as well; and, in view of my present circumstances, I give you my word of honor that I believe the first condition to be much more advantageous to the public interests of France in her relation toward her allies.

"Since it will be necessary to begin our preparations at once, I beg to be informed in time for me to select officers of age, experience, and ability, whom I ought to know before taking charge of the corps; and in this matter I should consult immediately M. le Prince de Montbarrey.

"Two very old lieutenant-colonels should command the infantry under me; for in distant expeditions the officers must agree, and I am very fond of veteran officers.

"As for myself, Monsieur le Comte, I shall ask for nothing; and as I shall hope to win promotion during the course of the war, you may give me either one of those commissions of M. de Sartine's which confer rank only in America; or one which should not prevent my seniors from resuming their rank after-

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 327; Stevens's Facsimiles, vol xvii. No. 1620.

ward; or a certificate which will enable me to command in the capacity merely of an American general officer.

"There would be three methods available to conceal the purpose of the expedition: 1st, to start all together from L'Orient under the pretence of capturing an island and of operating next autumn in Carolina; 2d, to appear to be sending these troops to M. de Bouillé,[1] in which case there would be no commander, and I should have the title of maréchal-des-logis; 3d, I should leave immediately, with the grenadiers and dragoons, for America, and the four battalions, under two veteran officers, would join me later, at Rhode Island.

"If I am to command, you may act with perfect security, for the Americans know me too well to entertain any unfounded anxiety.

"I am willing, if it is thought best, to bind myself not to ask either for rank or for title, and even to refuse them, in order to relieve the ministry.

"Second Supposition. In the second case, Monsieur le Comte, it would be necessary to take measures beforehand to counteract the unfavorable effect which would be produced in America by the arrival of another commander. The idea that I could not lead this detachment is the last one that would be entertained there. But in that event I should announce that I preferred an American division.

"I ought to be admitted to the secret, so that I could prepare the means and inform General Washington. For a secret which had been kept from me would seem very suspicious in Philadelphia.

"We should take at L'Orient three merchant frigates and a transport ship. We have an American crew, it is said; we should put on board the fifteen thousand coats, the fifteen thousand muskets, etc., and we should start at the end of the month for the continent.

"Upon our arrival in port, I should try to begin by seeing General Washington. I should take up a division in the army, and I should unite with M. de la Luzerne in getting everything ready for the arrival of the French.

"In order to join it to my division, to which it will serve as a model, whilst it will dispel the idea that people have of us, and show how easily we can all live together upon friendly terms, I wish to take with me immediately one battalion of six

[1] The French commandant in the West Indies.

hundred grenadiers, three hundred dragoons, and one hundred hussars.

"Two or three of the officers whom I shall take out with me must afterward be given the same rank in the French service that they have had in America; but I shall say that I have refused promotion for social reasons. This attention will be necessary in order to satisfy the self-esteem of the Americans. We could stop on our way at Bermuda and establish in power the party who favor liberty there.

"On Wednesday I shall go from here to Nantes, where the clothes are being made; I shall also attend to the selection of arms; I shall see the King's Regiment at Angers, to make a detachment from it; I shall then continue to L'Orient to hasten the preparation of the frigates and to see the battalion of grenadiers. I shall not return here before the 20th, and, as my departure ought to be a public one, I shall take my leave on the 25th, in the American uniform; and, if the wind is favorable, I should like to set sail the 1st of March.

"As it is physically impossible for a detachment commanded by a stranger to become as easily amalgamated, I believe that it ought to be increased by one battalion, which would carry the number to about three thousand six hundred men, and the grenadiers should be attached directly to me during the campaign. If this small army corps is given to a veteran field-marshal, we shall be certain to offend all the American leaders. Gates, Sullivan, and St. Clair will not readily consent to serve under any one else, and their votes in the Council will be opposed to any combined expedition. I think it necessary, very necessary, to take a brigadier, who shall then be made field-marshal, and who will look upon that rank as a fortune.

"This corps must consider itself as a division of our army; the commander of it must not pretend to special distinction, but must feel that he is an American major-general, ready to obey any orders that General Washington may think proper to give. The naval commander will be entitled to a more representative position.

"Conclusion. 1st. I believe it would be better to give the corps to me. 2d. If it is not given to me, I should be sent off immediately, with the resources that I have asked for. In either event it will, unfortunately, be necessary to intrust this secret to me, and to act with promptness.

"I shall have the honor, Monsieur le Comte, to present my respects to you during the procession.

"LAFAYETTE."

The expedition to America was decided upon very soon afterward, substantially upon the conditions submitted by the Marquis de La Fayette in his "Second Supposition." The detachment was given to one of the older French generals, and La Fayette was sent out in advance to announce its coming to Congress and to General Washington. But, instead of selecting for this command "a brigadier, who should then be made field-marshal," the King appointed one of his bravest and most experienced officers, who had won distinction in the conflict with Great Britain during the Seven Years' War, and who had been intended for the leadership of the finest *corps d'élite* in the expected attack upon England under the Comte de Vaux, —Lieutenant-General the Comte de Rochambeau. The expedition immediately assumed a character of the highest importance. The number of its troops was increased from four thousand, as had been at first proposed, to six thousand men, in deference to the rank and distinguished services of the commanding general; and many officers connected with the noblest and most powerful families in France were glad to take part in it.[1]

The Marquis de La Fayette was requested to prepare to set out at once, and as early as the middle of February orders were sent for the frigate Hermione, then lying at Rochefort, to be held in readiness for an important cruise. The frigate was ready to put to sea on the 28th; and on the 4th of March Captain Latouche received orders to convey the Marquis de La Fayette to Boston; a duty which the brave sailor undertook with evident gratification.[2] The appointment of the Comte de Ro-

[1] Mémoires de Rochambeau.

[2] "I shall show to the Marquis de La Fayette," he said, "all the respect and consideration which are prescribed not only by your orders to me, but by the dictates of my own heart toward a man whose acts have inspired me with the greatest desire to know him. I consider it a favor that an opportunity has been given me to prove the high esteem in which I hold him." —Archives de la Marine, B⁴, fol. 15.

chambeau was announced on the 9th of March, and on the 11th La Fayette was aboard the Hermione, at the Isle d'Aix. The orders given by the King to M. de Rochambeau were drawn up in consultation with La Fayette, whose knowledge of American military affairs was accepted as authority in connection with the various questions of extreme delicacy which arose upon the subject of uniting foreign troops to the soldiers of the Continental army; and at his earnest solicitation the important concessions were made, and incorporated into the royal orders, that the French troops should always be subject, whilst they were in America, to the command of General Washington; that, as they were auxiliaries only, they should always yield precedence to the American troops, the American army always occupying the right; and that American officers with equal rank and the same date of commission should have command.[1]

M. de La Fayette had received on the 5th of March from the hand of M. de Vergennes his own instructions, in which his course was definitely marked out, and the details of his conduct upon his arrival in America were so minutely set forth that they were evidently the result of most careful deliberation, in which not only had La Fayette assisted the Government with his advice, but also the Admiral the Comte d'Estaing, and M. Gérard de Rayneval, who had both now returned to France, were probably consulted. It was a matter of the utmost importance that this attempt upon the part of the King's Government to help his allies should not fail, either through miscalculation or misunderstanding, and that no detail should be omitted which could help to render it effectual in promoting active operations and acceptable to the Americans.

After the Marquis de La Fayette had gone aboard the

[1] See the Instructions to the Comte de Rochambeau, 1st March, 1780, translated in Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 493.

Hermione at the Isle d'Aix, Captain Latouche moved his ship into the roadstead of Rochelle, whence, all being in readiness, he set sail with his distinguished guest on the night of the 14th of March, 1780. The orders under which La Fayette now returned to the United States to resume his position as an American general, and at the same time as the accredited representative of the French Government, upon whom rested a grave responsibility in the part he was to play in forwarding the success of the expedition, were as follows:[1]

"M. le Marquis de la Fayette, in proceeding to America, will hasten to join General Washington, to whom he will announce under the bond of secrecy that the King, who desires to give the United States a new proof of his affection and of his interest in their welfare, has decided to send out to them early in the spring a reinforcement of six ships of the line and six thousand men, of regular infantry.

"The convoy is directed, if no obstacle arises, to land at Rhode Island, in order to be in a better position to assist the American army, and to unite with it if General Washington considers it necessary. But as it may be possible that the British, after having voluntarily evacuated Rhode Island, may have changed their plans and have returned there, M. de la Fayette is requested, in order to protect the French fleet against a surprise, to obtain authority from General Washington to send to Rhode Island, and also to the island of Block House if it be inhabited and the faith of the inhabitants may be relied upon, some of the French officers who are attached to him, each of whom shall bear a letter from him which shall assure the commander of the French fleet that he may enter safely into the port.

"These officers shall be ordered to remain near the sea-shore and to be constantly on the watch, having at hand a number of swift boats and trusty pilots, ready to put out the instant they sight a fleet large enough to be reasonably taken for the French convoy. But, as heavy weather at sea may prevent these officers from going aboard, if the entrance to Rhode Island is clear and open, they will hoist upon the island of Block House, and upon points Judith and Sekonnet, the *French* flag, white above, and

[1] Instructions remises à M. de La Fayette le 5 Mars, 1780; Etats-Unis, t. 11, No. 69: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 314.

beneath, upon the same staff, the red flag; in case, however, the enemy shall have retaken possession of the island, the *American* flag shall be hoisted, above and below, upon the same flag-staff, at the places aforementioned; and this will be a signal to the commander of the French fleet to bear away from the port. If no French officer shall appear with a letter from M. le Marquis de la Fayette to give information as to the best course by which to approach the shore and as to the possibility of disembarking, and if the signals herein described shall not have been placed, then the fleet will put into Boston with its convoy, and await orders there from General Washington. In order that there may be no surprise in connection with the duty upon which these officers shall be sent by M. le Marquis de la Fayette, and that, in case of accident, they may not be replaced by unauthorized persons, the watchword shall be *St. Louis et Philadelphie.*

"If the winds should drive the fleet to the southward, it will then endeavor to find the Capes of Virginia. It is intended to station an intelligent officer at Cape Henry also, under orders to join the fleet, who shall be sufficiently acquainted with the state of affairs in America, and especially as to the possibility of disembarking at Rhode Island, to give exact information to the French generals. In this case, the signals at Cape Henry shall be the same as at the approaches to Rhode Island, but the watchword shall then be *Marie et Boston.*

"If General Washington should consider the employment of the French troops more useful in the South, he could send orders to them by this same officer directing them to go there. He will provide him, in that event, with instructions, which cannot be too explicit, as to the most convenient point to land at with safety and to protect the fleet and the transports against all risk and against the danger of accident; as to the localities at which the French army may establish dépôts where such things may be left in safety as are the least necessary and the most troublesome to carry; and as to the means of obtaining provisions in sufficient quantities, and draught-horses and pack-horses for transportation, as well as for the artillery and for the munitions and the baggage. M. le Marquis de la Fayette will understand, in view of the difficulty of communicating between the North and the South and of the necessity of gaining time and of employing it usefully in our operations, how important it is that the instructions given by the American general shall comprehend everything, shall provide for everything, and shall leave nothing to be explained.

"The corps of French troops shall be purely auxiliary, and

as such it shall act only under the orders of General Washington. The general of the French land forces shall receive his orders from the American Commander-in-Chief upon all subjects except such as relate to the internal management [*police intérieure*] of his corps, which must have justice administered and be governed in every respect according to the laws of its own country. The naval general will be instructed to second with all his force every undertaking in which his co-operation shall be asked for: it being understood, of course, that the operation shall be concerted and the plans decided upon with him, and that he shall be heard as to any objections he may wish to present.

"We shall not propose any operations, because these must depend upon circumstances and upon the local possibilities; it will be for General Washington and the Council of War to decide upon such as may be most useful. All that the King desires is, that the troops whom he is sending to the aid of his allies, the United States, shall co-operate effectively to deliver them, once for all, from the yoke and the tyranny of the English. His Majesty expects that, by an interchange of courtesies which friends owe to each other, General Washington and the American superior officers will permit the French officers and soldiers to enjoy all the privileges that are compatible with the good of the service. It will be indispensable that General Washington shall give directions as to the means by which the subsistence of the French troops may be made easy, and that, to this end, he shall collect in advance, at the point where he believes the fleet is likely to come in and the troops to disembark, provisions for the soldiers and for the crews, and secure places suitable for the reception of the sick; finally, that he shall make the necessary preparations in order that the French troops may be assured of their subsistence and at reasonable rates.

"When M. le Marquis de la Fayette shall have agreed with General Washington upon all the measures to be taken as to the arrival of the French troops and as to the safety of their landing, he will present himself to Congress; but he will have agreed beforehand with the American general as to how far he shall admit Congress into the secret of our movements.

"Having reached Philadelphia, M. le Marquis de la Fayette will see, first of all, the Chevalier de la Luzerne. He will communicate to him his instructions and any supplementary instructions which he may have received; he will confide to him everything that has passed in his conferences with General Washington, and he will take no step but jointly and in concert with the

King's minister, upon whose advice he is requested to act; for His Majesty, who honors his minister with his esteem, is desirous that he shall take part in all the negotiations with the United States.

"The Chevalier de la Luzerne will be informed by letter of the measures taken by the King, but he will be requested not to make use of this information until after he shall have conferred with M. le Marquis de la Fayette; unless (which it is to be hoped will not occur) the latter should be prevented by insuperable obstacles from reaching his destination and from fulfilling the duty intrusted to him, in which event the Chevalier de la Luzerne would be authorized to replace him, and he would then be enjoined, before making any formal announcement to Congress, to confer with, and concert his measures with, General Washington.

"As Le Sieur Holker, Consul-General of France, has given evidence of his zeal and intelligence in the commissary department, it may be well, without admitting him entirely into the secret, to let him make preparations to obtain flour for the troops of the French auxiliary corps. In this connection he may be very serviceable to the French commissary who is sent out for that purpose.[1]

"In case the land operations should not require the co-operation of the fleet, its commander will be at liberty to cruise at such distance from the shore as he shall deem proper in order to do the enemy as much damage as possible. But he will be particularly instructed not to absent himself, and not to undertake any enterprise, except with the concurrence and approval of the generals commanding the land forces."

To these official instructions for the Marquis de La Fayette M. de Vergennes added a document in the nature of a private suggestion as to some enterprises which might be undertaken in America; although he had declared that it was his purpose not to touch upon that subject, because the manner in which the troops were to be employed must largely depend upon circumstances, and upon the decision of the Council of War. The capture of New York from the British was well known to be a

[1] M. de Corny, who accompanied La Fayette to America on board the Hermione.

favorite enterprise in the Continental army, one which General Washington was constantly seeking an opportunity to carry out; and, as La Fayette had undoubtedly discussed it frequently with M. de Vergennes, it was natural for the Secretary to comment upon that. His suggestion as to the employment of the French troops in the South, and as to the wresting of Florida from the enemy in order to give that country to Spain, was a politic move toward creating and continuing amicable relations at the Court of Madrid. Immediately after the understanding had been reached by the two Crowns as to their joint attitude toward the war, the Conde de Floridablanca had requested the Court of Versailles to use its good offices with Congress in favor of Spain, and to help her in the acquisition of additional territory upon the southern borders of the United States; and the Comte de Vergennes was willing to show his gratification at having attained the result which he had so long sought, by introducing into his supplementary instructions to M. de La Fayette a mild intercession in behalf of the Spanish claims,— which M. Doniol has, with wisdom, termed *politics* rather than war.[1]

Although the plan proposed by these private instructions was never put into execution, this document is interesting as a relic of by-gone diplomacy in connection with the steps that America was taking toward the accomplishment of her liberty; and it would be worth preserving, even if it had no other interest, for the touching, almost fatherly, appeal which the Comte de Vergennes made in it to General Washington to take care of the "braves gens" who were being sent so far away from home to help the allies of the King.

It is entitled "Projet particulier remis à M. de La Fayette le 5 Mars, 1780."[2]

[1] La Participation de la France, iv. 283.

[2] Etats-Unis, t. 11, No. 70: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 318.

"Although it has been said in the instructions given to M. de la Fayette that it is not our intention to propose any operation, but that we shall leave that subject to the decision of General Washington and of his Council of War, yet it appears to us that we should present an idea to him which, if it be practicable, seems likely to prove of advantage both in a political and a military sense. There are two political considerations which, it seems to us, ought to govern the offensive operations of the United States; the one is, to remove the enemy as far as possible from their frontiers and to prevent him from enclosing them on every side as he now does in fact by occupying Florida, part of the Mississippi, Canada, and Nova Scotia; the other, to make themselves interesting to Spain, and to draw her toward an alliance with them, which can be accomplished only by contributing to her advantage. That Power may have a purpose in regard to the Floridas, which are part of her ancient patrimony; and it would be of infinitely greater advantage to America that they should return to their former domination than that they should continue in the possession of the English, as the United States would be freed from the neighborhood of the English upon one side at least, and upon the side whence, in case of necessity, they might expect to obtain that assistance which could not be rendered to them directly. Besides, whatever the views of Spain may be as to the Floridas, it is of interest to her that the English shall not be in the South in such force as will encourage them to enterprises against her territory.

"Among various plans that present themselves for the accomplishment of these salutary results, we shall merely consider two, which we shall rapidly sketch.

"The first would be, to move the whole or a part of the auxiliary corps into Georgia or Carolina. There are several difficulties in this connection which can be provided for only upon the ground, namely: the force that the British may have in that district, which must be considerable if the troops embarked toward the close of last year at New York have been sent there; the want of a harbor upon that coast in which the fleet and the transports could be sheltered from the storms and protected against the enemy; the difficulty of securing storehouses, of establishing communications and of providing subsistence for the land forces, who would certainly be without all the resources which would enable them to penetrate the country; and many other obstacles which it would take too long to designate, but which cannot fail to be observed upon the spot.

"The second plan, which would perhaps not be the least de-

cisive, is to make a diversion sufficiently imposing to oblige the enemy to recall the forces that he may have in the South, and to convert his offensive operations into defensive ones.

"New York is the central point of the British, the arsenal whence they send out the thunderbolts with which they threaten America. It is important to them, above all else, to retain it if they wish to have a firm foothold in the domains of the United States. No doubt the forces they have left there are sufficient to protect the island, the city and its dependencies, against an assault and capture by the army of General Washington; but that army strengthened by a French corps sufficiently numerous will be able to accomplish more than it could do alone.

"Would it be impossible to make the English tremble for this so important possession, and perhaps even to strip them of it? It was from Long Island that they took New York; why should we not attempt to take it from them by the same way? We start with the supposition that the six thousand men sent to the South by the British general shall not have returned to New York, and that a part of the naval force which escorted them thither shall not have come back. These premises having been assured, would it be unreasonable to suppose that the French fleet, after having communicated with Rhode Island, could bear down with its convoy upon Long Island?

"Sandy Hook appears to be a good anchorage; for the English fleet and that under the Comte d'Estaing have anchored there successively, and with comparative safety. If Jamaica Bay, where a descent might be attempted, did not furnish security enough to the transport ships, they could be withdrawn to Sandy Hook under cover of the fleet.

"Although Jamaica Bay is mentioned here as a point at which it would be suitable to disembark, it is possible that there are others more convenient, to the south or to the north of the island; it would be for the generals to decide upon the places which seemed to them most convenient. Whilst the Frenchmen were landing upon Long Island, the American army would show itself in force at King's Bridge, making a demonstration of attack in full force in order to prevent the English from relieving the troops whom they might have upon Long Island. It is believed that these would not be sufficient in number to dispute the possession of the island very long with their assailants.

"The French troops, having gained possession of it, would place batteries of cannon and mortars at the most advanced position in the direction of New York. We are informed that the

width of the stream, though considerable at that point, would not destroy the effect of a cannon-ball, and that we should easily silence the batteries which command the approaches from the sea. Events having reached this point, the fleet might readily move to the inside of the harbor, and, obliging the enemy by this manœuvre to evacuate Staten Island, force him also to give up the city of New York, where it would be extremely difficult for him to maintain his position.

"But if the enemy were reduced to carrying on the campaign upon so narrow an island, his privations there and the lack of subsistence would soon make it necessary for him to succumb, if the vigorous blows of the Americans had not already forced him to lay down his arms.

"But, however desirable it may be that this expedition should have so happy an ending, we must be careful not to persuade ourselves that it cannot fail. We must bear in mind that the return of the British in force, or some of the accidents which are but too common in a war in which naval and land forces are co-operating, may defeat the enterprise. For this reason it will be wise to weigh carefully the advantages and the disadvantages of the undertaking, and, under all circumstances, to keep open an avenue of retreat for the troops as well as for the ships. We can rely in these matters only upon the wisdom and the skill of the generals, and upon the knowledge which they may possess of the ground itself.

"The well-known humanity of General Washington and the esteem in which he is held in Europe as well as in America leave no doubt in our minds that he will take especial care to protect a corps of brave fellows sent out more than a thousand leagues to the assistance of his native land. Whilst they are ready to undertake any task for the welfare of America, they ought not to be rashly or thoughtlessly exposed. M. le Marquis de la Fayette is requested to discuss these ideas with the American general; to invite him to express his opinion upon them, and to take note of such objections or modifications as he may suggest. He will report upon all these subjects, with minute detail, to the generals of the French land and naval forces; and, if this project is to be carried out, he will provide a sufficient number of faithful and experienced pilots to conduct the vessels to the various points which shall have been fixed upon for disembarking."

In the mean time, after the departure of the Marquis de La Fayette for America, on the Hermione, the prepa-

rations for the expedition were advanced with all possible speed. The Comte de Rochambeau exerted himself with the utmost diligence in his department; and in a very short time he was ready at the port of Brest to embark his division of six thousand men. But the equipment of the fleet, which was to sail under the command of the Chevalier de Ternay, gave rise to unexpected and annoying delays. The transports were fitting out at Toulon, where the orders had been given with apparent negligence and great dilatoriness; and even after they were ready for sea they were obliged to sail from Toulon to Brest. The admiral was compelled to wait several weeks before any of the ships arrived, during which time he could take no measures for the arrangement of his convoy. Indeed, it was decided at last to embark as many men as the ships then present would carry, and to set out as soon as possible, leaving the others to come after when an opportunity should offer. But even this plan, which was adopted in March, could not be put into effect until considerably later: so that it was the 2d of May when Admiral de Ternay finally came out of the port of Brest and put to sea, with the expedition of the Comte de Rochambeau, for America. He had with him six ships of the line and five frigates, with five thousand five hundred effective troops.

The expedition succeeded in escaping the notice of the British fleet, which it was feared would come out from Plymouth to intercept them; and a month later M. de Vergennes wrote to La Fayette[1] that all the officers and men had started in the best of spirits, with their hearts bent upon distinguishing themselves, which there were experience and ability enough among them to render possible. He added that the five thousand five hundred

[1] Letter of 3d June, 1780; Etats-Unis, t. 12, No. 59: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 286.

effective men were all who could be sent aboard the ships, the lack of transports having prevented the others from shipping, and that, as the season was now well advanced and the British were likely to come out, in which event they could easily blockade the port of Brest, where the naval armament was too small to oppose them, it was not likely that the other two regiments could be sent forward until the following autumn. This letter contained also a curious admission which appears to indicate that the Comte de Vergennes began to feel considerable anxiety upon the subject of the expedition, for which he, more than any one else, was officially responsible, and that he had some misgivings as to whether it would really be welcome in America, especially if it were so much larger than the body of troops which, under La Fayette's persuasion, it had been intended at first to offer to the United States. "Perhaps it is well that the two regiments were left behind," he said, "for we shall see how the first troops are received, and whether they [the Americans] want any more. For you remember that I asked for only four thousand men, because I feared that a greater number would disturb and alarm the United States."

But it was not only an effective force in the field that America stood in need of at that moment. The people were nearly worn out with fighting, and almost destitute of everything but perseverance and courage; money was required, with which to pay debts that were pressing, and to help re-establish a nearly extinct credit. The generosity of the King of France extended beyond the military and naval aid which he had thus sent us to carry on our war of Independence. The appeals of Congress through the American minister had found a hearing at Versailles, and France now added a loan of three millions of livres to the large benefits already contributed by her in our behalf during the year 1780. The negotiation was an-

nounced by M. de Vergennes to the Chevalier de La Luzerne at Philadelphia as follows:[1]

"I shall not withhold from you the information that, Mr. Franklin having confided to me the embarrassment in which he was placed, not only to meet the obligations of Congress, but in regard to the purchases of arms and clothing which he has been ordered by Congress to make, I have secured for him an advance, in the nature of a loan, of three millions of livres. This assistance has placed the minister in a position not only to pay the bills contracted by Congress, but also to obtain clothing enough for ten thousand men."

And not very long afterward this loan was doubled by an additional advance of three millions of livres.

[1] Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 285.

CHAPTER XIX.

RETURN TO AMERICA—ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH FLEET —MISSION TO NEWPORT.

THE frigate Hermione made a safe but comparatively long and tedious voyage across the Atlantic, and arrived at Boston on the 28th of April, 1780. As his ship was approaching the entrance to the harbor, on the 27th, the Marquis de La Fayette wrote a letter to General Washington, which he despatched immediately upon going ashore, in compliance with the instruction given him to present to the Commander-in-Chief as soon as possible the message sent to America by the King announcing the aid which His Majesty had determined to send out to us in the expedition under the Comte de Rochambeau. Having been absent more than a year, during which he had heard comparatively little news from America, and had been singularly unfortunate in not receiving letters sent to him from time to time, La Fayette knew little or nothing of the details of the war; and consequently he had no idea where he should find General Washington. He wrote to him, however, that if he should be north of Philadelphia when the letter came to hand, he begged him to await his arrival; for he had an announcement of the greatest importance which he had been directed to make to him personally and at once; adding that he was about to land at Boston upon the following day, and that he should set out the day after that for the General's quarters.[1]

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[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 318.

The sight of this frigate sailing up the harbor and flying the French flag aroused the liveliest interest in Boston, which was increased to expressions of joy and hearty welcome as soon as it became known that the occasion of its coming was the return of the Marquis de La Fayette to America. People crowded the docks and lined the streets to greet him with cheers, and he was taken in triumph to the residence of Governor Hancock, whose guest he became whilst he was in the city.

General Washington was at his head-quarters in Morristown; and he received La Fayette's letter there on the 7th of May. The return of "his young soldier," as the latter had called himself, undoubtedly gave him the greatest personal satisfaction; and, even before he knew him to be the bearer of news which was welcome indeed under the depression and the conviction of hopelessness that were settling upon the country in the gloomy winter of 1779 and the spring of 1780, Washington looked forward with pleasure to the day when he should have La Fayette with him again. He answered his letter upon the day after he received it, to say that he was sorry he did not know what route La Fayette would take through the State of New York, in order that he might send out a detachment to escort him; but, he assured him, "I received it with all the joy that the sincerest friendship could dictate, and with that impatience which an ardent desire to see you could not fail to inspire. . . . I most sincerely congratulate you upon your safe arrival in America, and shall embrace you with all the warmth of an affectionate friend, when you come to head-quarters, where a bed is prepared for you." And a few days later he said to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, "You will participate in the joy I feel at the arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette. No event could have given me greater pleasure on a personal account, and motives of public utility conspire to make it agreeable. . . . He announces a fresh and striking instance of the

friendship of your court, which cannot fail to contribute greatly to perpetuate the gratitude of this country."[1]

La Fayette reached the head-quarters at Morristown on the morning of the 10th of May, and spent four days with the Commander-in-Chief. After a reception from the officers and soldiers which showed that his presence was also gratifying to the army, he retired with General Washington for a private conversation, and immediately announced to him the coming of the expedition. This news appeared to Washington a subject of the gravest importance in the interests of the United States, out of which great good and eventual success might come, if it were properly taken advantage of. But he believed that, if the people failed to avail themselves of this occasion, and to strain the enfeebled resources of the country to the utmost in an effort to co-operate, such an opportunity was not likely ever to return. He took immediate steps to forecast the events that were likely to occur in a combined enterprise, and to carry out the requests of the French Government as to the preparation of signals at the points indicated, and of the facilities to enable the fleet to come to land. His letters to Mr. James Duane, to Governor Jefferson, and to Major-General Heath and Governor Clinton are exceedingly interesting in this connection.[2]

M. de La Fayette left Morristown on the 14th of May and went directly to Philadelphia, in order to carry out still further his instructions by conferring with the Chevalier de La Luzerne and by presenting himself to Congress, the Commander-in-Chief having prepared his introduction to that assembly by the following communication addressed to the President:[3]

"The Marquis de Lafayette will have the honor to deliver to you this letter. I am persuaded Congress will participate in the

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 29–31.

[2] See Sparks, Ibid., vii. 32, 35, 36, 43.

[3] From Morristown, 13th May, 1780: Sparks, Ibid., vii. 31.

joy I feel at the return of a gentleman, who has so signally distinguished himself in the service of this country, who has given so many and so decisive proofs of his attachment to its interests, and who ought to be dear to it from every motive. The warm friendship I have for him conspires with considerations of public utility to afford me a double satisfaction in his return. During the time he has been in France, he has uniformly manifested the same zeal in our affairs, which animated his conduct while he was among us; and he has been upon all occasions an essential friend to America. He merits, and I doubt not Congress will give him, every mark of consideration in their power."

On the 16th of May, La Fayette arrived in Philadelphia, where he delivered the above letter to the President of Congress, accompanied by one written by himself, the original of which is now in the Archives at Washington:[1]

"PHILADELPHIA, May 16th, 1780.

"SIR,—After so many favors which on every occasion, and particularly at the time of my obtaining a Leave of Absence Congress were pleas'd most graciously to Bestow on me, I dare presume myself intitl'd to impart to them the private feelings which I now so happily experience.

"if from an early epoch in Our Noble Contest, I gloried in the name of an American Soldier, and heartily enjoyed the honor I have of serving the United States, my satisfaction is at this long wish'd for moment entirely compleat—When putting an end to my furlough, I have been able again to join my colours, under which I may hope for opportunities of indulging the ardent zeal, the unbounded gratitude, the warm, and, I might say, the patriotic love By which I am forever Bound to America.

"in Begging, Sir, you will present Congress with a new Assurance of my profound Respect, and my grateful, affectionate Sentiments, I have the honor to Be with the highest Regard Your Excellency's

"Most obedient humble Servant

"LAFAYETTE."

This characteristic expression of La Fayette's feelings for America and for its people, as well as of his pleasure

[1] Department of State, Papers of the Old Congress.

at being with them again, in language which plainly showed his lack of recent usage of the English tongue,[1] but which left no doubt of the sincerity of his sentiments, was received with much gratification in Congress, where an acknowledgment of it was made immediately by a resolution addressed to him:[2]

"A letter of the 13th from general Washington, and one of this day from major general the marquis de la Fayette, were read; whereupon,

"On motion of Mr. Duane seconded by Mr. Livingston, Resolved, That Congress consider the return of the marquis de la Fayette to America, to resume his command, as a fresh proof of the disinterested zeal and persevering attachment which have justly recommended him to the public confidence and applause; and that they receive with pleasure a tender of the further services of so gallant and meritorious an officer."

It was not known in Congress at the time of the passage of this resolution that La Fayette had returned for any other purpose than to resume his position as an officer in the Continental army; he was made welcome upon his own behalf, and because of the national confidence in his integrity and merit.

It had been considered wise by the French Cabinet to withhold from the body of Congress the secret of the expedition under M. de Rochambeau, upon the ground that secrets are hard to keep when they have been confided to the discretion of several people; for it was feared that if the news became known it might put the enemy more upon the alert and cause him to make preparations the lack of which would perhaps leave open an opportunity for a combined attack as soon as the French fleet should

[1] This peculiarity of expression always followed upon the association of M. de La Fayette with his own countrymen, and the consequent use of his own language; it is distinctly noticeable in the letters which he wrote in English at the time when he was frequently aboard Admiral d'Estaing's flag-ship at Newport.

[2] Journals of Congress, Tuesday, May 16th, 1780.

arrive. But the British commander in New York already knew, through his despatches from England, that Admiral de Ternay was about to take command of a squadron destined to aid the Americans, consisting of six ships of the line, and that six regiments of troops had been embarked. Therefore there was no longer any necessity to conceal the intelligence, and it was soon generally discussed in Congress and throughout the country.

The object of paramount importance now was the effort that must be made, in all the States, to collect and equip a force sufficient to unite with the expedition in concerted action against the British. The prospect was unpromising indeed. The army was weak, ill fed, insufficiently clothed. Congress could not levy taxes; it could not even demand troops; it could only recommend measures, for which the authority of the Governors must first be had. But it was clear that the States must now feel themselves constrained to act effectively and at once. Upon this point General Washington felt very earnestly. He said to the committee appointed by Congress, who were then undertaking to secure the co-operation of the States, to which they had recently addressed a letter upon the subject, that the measures they proposed met with his approval; but he continued, "I very freely give it as my opinion, that, unless they are carried into execution in the fullest extent and with the greatest decision and rapidity, it will be impossible for us to undertake the intended coöperation with any reasonable prospect of success." Unless the States should make extraordinary and effectual efforts now, said he, "the succor designed for our benefit will prove a serious misfortune. . . . Drained and weakened as we already are, the exertions we shall make, though they may be too imperfect to secure success, will at any rate be such as to leave us in a state of relaxation and debility, from which it will be difficult if not impracticable to recover; the country exhausted, the people dispirited, the conse-

quence and reputation of these States in Europe sunk, our friends chagrined and discouraged, our enemies deriving new credit, new confidence, new resources. We have not, nor ought we to wish, an alternative. The court of France has done so much for us, that we must make a decisive effort on our part. . . . But the conjuncture requires all our wisdom and all our energy."[1]

In the mean time, although General Washington had not been willing to undertake alone the responsibility of arranging a plan of combined operations, but had urged upon La Fayette the expediency of presenting himself to Congress, of acquainting them with the secret, and of concerting measures with the French minister,[2] yet he was evidently reflecting upon what it would be best to recommend, in view of the dispersed condition of the British forces. As Sir Henry Clinton was operating with a large detachment in South Carolina, the garrison at New York was weakened, in consequence, and reduced to about one-half of its usual number. General Washington wrote to La Fayette, on the 16th of May, two days after the latter had set out for Philadelphia, that, having reflected upon the plan which it would be to the greatest advantage for the French fleet and army to pursue upon their arrival in America, it appeared to him that the first object, in view of the enemy's situation, ought to be an attack upon New York. He therefore advised La Fayette to write to the Comte de Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay, urging them to proceed with all possible speed to Sandy Hook, where they would be met with further advices of the precise situation, strength, and disposition of the enemy and of our army, and with proposals for their future movements; though if they should arrive at Rhode Island and should hear that the British forces then operating in the South had returned to New York, they would be

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 50.

[2] M. de La Luzerne to the Comte de Vergennes, cited by Sparks, Ibid., 32.

requested to remain at Newport until a definite plan could be concerted.[1]

The General was exceedingly anxious to take advantage of any opportunity against the enemy that the arrival of the French succor and the return of La Fayette could afford. "I impatiently wait, my dear Marquis, to know the result of the arrangements you were to make with Congress," he wrote him on the 19th of May, although La Fayette had been gone only five days: "the time glides away so fast, and we have so little before us, that every moment is infinitely precious and ought to be improved."[2] And in the same letter there is an allusion to a curious plan for deceiving the British by an address to the Canadians, which La Fayette and General Washington had discussed at head-quarters. It was intended that La Fayette should prepare a proclamation to the Canadians, in his own name, with as great an air of probability as possible, or perhaps, to make it seem more plausible, that he should have two proclamations made. One of these should intimate to the Canadians the arrival of a French fleet and army in the St. Lawrence River, to co-operate by way of Rhode Island,—where they were to touch in order to further some important purposes; and it should dwell upon the happy occasion this would afford Canada to renew her ancient friendship with France by joining the allied arms and by becoming a part of the American confederation, with all the privileges and advantages enjoyed by the other members, cautioning them by no means to aid the enemy in defending the province. The other proclamation should be based upon the supposition that the fleet and the army had already arrived, and should contain an invitation to the Canadians to range themselves under the allied banner. In each proclama-

[1] General Washington to La Fayette, 16th May, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 38.

[2] Sparks, Ibid., 44.

tion La Fayette was to refer to himself as a French and American officer charged by the King of France and by the Continental Congress to address the people of Canada. It was intended to have a number of these proclamations printed, and to allow them, ostensibly through some accident or breach of confidence, to slip within the British lines, where they were expected to produce an immediate effect; and, in order further to mystify the enemy, the following paragraph was to be allowed to appear in the newspapers:

"We have it from good authority, that the Marquis de Lafayette brings the important and agreeable intelligence of a very considerable naval and land force, intended to be sent by His Most Christian Majesty to the succour of these States; and that the campaign will open with a combined operation against New York. This, there is every reason to hope, with proper exertions on our part, will put a happy period to the war; nor can there be any room to doubt that the glorious opportunity will be effectually improved. This instance of the friendship of our ally is a new claim to the lasting affection and gratitude of this country."

La Fayette did in fact prepare a proclamation of this kind to the Canadians in accordance with the General's suggestion; it was a long address, filled with arguments intended to persuade them to join the army of M. de Rochambeau and expel the British from Canada. But it is likely that its effect upon the enemy was destroyed by the true information as to the movements of the French fleet and the purposes of General Washington, which had been given them by Benedict Arnold, who, as one of the Continental major-generals, was in the secret, and who was at that time in treasonable correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton. Oddly enough, General Washington had intrusted to Arnold this very proclamation, for the purpose of having it printed. His letter to him, dated at Morristown, on the 4th of June, is as follows:[1]

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 72.

"DEAR SIR,—Enclosed you have a draught of a proclamation addressed to the inhabitants of Canada. You will be pleased to put this into the hands of a printer, whose secrecy and discretion may be depended on, and desire him to strike off a proof-sheet with the utmost despatch, which you will send to me for correction. We shall want at least five hundred copies. The importance of this business will sufficiently impress you with the necessity of transacting it with every possible degree of caution. The printer is to be particularly charged not on any account to reserve a copy himself, or suffer one to get abroad."

It partially deceived the British commander, however, who appears to have believed that the attack upon Canada had been proposed; though he knew through Arnold that it was not being carried out. He sent a copy of it to Lord George Germain, in August, saying that he had reason to believe that the Marquis de La Fayette had intended to have it published in Canada "if the proposed expedition against that province had taken place."

La Fayette's time in Philadelphia was spent in discussing the situation of the country with members of Congress and in consulting the Chevalier de La Luzerne as to the measures to be taken upon the arrival of the French; in which he showed the ardor of an American patriot, and a zeal in awakening the enthusiasm of our own people that was remarkable in a man of his age and former associations. He had been somewhat prepared for the distress that he found in America upon his return from France; the resources of the country were constantly overtaxed, and he knew from his own experience that it was hard to keep the army together at all. But he had not foreseen the degree of wretchedness which actually existed; and his disappointment was greater than he could entirely conceal, even under the tone of encouragement with which he sought to strengthen the will and renew the energies of those about him. No exact record has been kept of all the steps that he took at this time, but we know his activity from the remnants of his corre-

spondence that have been preserved. Thus we find him again at the head-quarters in Morristown on the 31st of May, making an earnest and stirring appeal to the patriotism of Pennsylvania in a confidential letter addressed to Mr. Reed, the President, which shows distinctly the workings of his mind:[1]

"It is only as an American soldier, as an ardent lover of our noble cause, as one who, having been lately on both sides of the Atlantic, may the more properly foresee good and bad consequences, that he has been here and there led into the secrets. It is not only on all the aforesaid accounts that I am far concerned in the operations of the campaign. But you may lately guess I was not a stranger to the planning of the co-operation, which I then thought to be very important to America, which I now find to be necessary, and in the course of those arrangements, I need not mention that I ever spoke with a becoming pride of the American army, of the efforts which the virtue of America would make towards an honorable co-operation.

"Those people are coming, my good friend, full of ardour and sanguine hopes, and may be every day expected. France and Spain are in high expectations. The world is looking on us, and all the European powers, that never saw America but through a spy glass, are watching the opportunity of fixing, at once, their fluctuating opinions. It is from me, on the moment of their arrival, that the French Generals expect intelligence, and you may guess that paquets shall be by them immediately despatched to Europe. An army that is reduced to nothing, that wants provisions, that has not one of the necessary means to make war, such is the situation wherein I found our troops, and however prepared I could have been to this unhappy sight, by our past distresses, I confess I had no idea of such an extremity. Shall I be obliged to confess our inability, and what shall be my feelings on the occasion, not only as an American and American soldier, but also as one that has highly boasted in Europe of the spirit, the virtue, the resources of America. Though I had been directed to furnish the French Court and the French Generals with early and minuted intelligence, I confess, pride has stopped my pen, and notwithstanding past promises, I have avoided entering into any details, till our Army is put in a better and more decent situation.

[1] See the Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, by William B. Reed.

"We have men, my dear Sir, we have provisions, we have everything that is wanted, provided the country is awakened and its resources are brought forth. That, you know, can't be done by Congress, and unless the States take the whole matter upon themselves, we are lost. You will, both as a soldier and a politician, easily foresee that the crisis is one way or other a decisive one, and that if proper exertions are made, we may expect everything that is good.

"As you are a military man (and I wish it was for the moment the case with the other leading men in America), you know that filling up immediately the Continental battalions is the way of having an army; and that cannot be done, but by militia drafts." [1]

It was, indeed, a moment when even the bravest patriots might well be disheartened; when it required heroic self-sacrifice and devotion to enable those men to stand up once more and struggle forward along the dismal road which led toward the goal of liberty. General Washington's army, which at this time was made up of only about six thousand Continental troops, of whom little more than half were fit for duty, had been put to "the severest test," as the Commander-in-Chief had said, of virtue and of patience. At times they were five or six days in succession without bread to eat, and frequently they were deprived of meat; there were occasions when for two or three days together they had neither meat nor bread; and Washington declared that his soldiers had eaten during that campaign "every kind of horse food but hay."

The men were not half clothed, the quartermaster's department had not the means of bringing the army into an active campaign, and the military chest did not contain a dollar. Besides this, privation tormented others who were dependent upon the support of these men, many of whom had given all they had, in addition to their personal services; for the pay of an officer was now reduced by the

[1] See also General Washington's letter to President Reed upon the same subject, Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 58.

depreciation of the paper money to such a pittance that it could not supply the most moderate demands. The pay of a major-general, it was said,[1] "would no longer have compensated an express rider, and that of a captain would not have furnished the shoes in which he marched when leading his company against the enemy."

But the indomitable courage of Washington still kept hope alive in the breasts of his countrymen. His vigorous and emphatic appeals, not only to Congress but to the States as well, and his representations of the disaster that was sure to follow unless something were done to take a timely advantage of the succors from France which the Marquis de La Fayette had announced and which might be expected every day, rekindled the fires of patriotism; and once more the country responded to his call.

In the mean time, whilst the Commander-in-Chief was awaiting the arrival of the French fleet, and was meditating an attack which the united forces of the two armies would enable him to make, Sir Henry Clinton, having completed the reduction of Charleston, and feeling certain that he had brought the Southern States, especially the Carolinas, into submission to the King, had left Lord Cornwallis in command at the South and had returned to New York on the 17th of June. He brought with him some four thousand disciplined troops and the ships of war under Admiral Arbuthnot which had been detached for the operations before Charleston. This accession increased the regular force in New York to twelve thousand men, rank and file; and most of this could be employed in active service in the field, because the British commander had at his disposal for garrison duty some four thousand militia and refugees.

It appeared, therefore, to many of the best officers of the Continental army that the plan of capturing New

[1] Marshall, Life of Washington, iv. 217.

York must be abandoned, at least for the present, because there could be no hope of a successful attack upon an enemy so numerous and so strongly intrenched as the British then were. But General Washington looked upon this operation as one of paramount importance in view of the state of the country; and, since it was to his mind the one stroke that, if successful, would terminate the war, his anxiety to relieve the people from their present burdens by giving them that peace which everybody ardently longed for, impelled him to keep it in view as the first object to be presented to the attention of the French commanders.

To La Fayette, who evidently judged from the conversations about him that the General was likely to be influenced by the same considerations that had developed the opinions of his subordinates, and who had written to him upon the subject, he replied,[1]—

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—I have received your favor of this date, and thank you for the sentiments contained in it. You have totally misconceived my meaning if you think I have or shall relinquish the idea of an enterprise against New York, till it shall appear obviously impracticable, from the want of force or means to operate. I have not as yet relaxed in any preparation tending to this end; nor shall I, till I am convinced of the futility of the measure. I would, by all means, have it understood as my wish, that the French squadron, if superior to Arbuthnot's since the junction, should take a station, while it can do it with safety, off Sandy Hook. This, and our exertions in the mean while, will demonstrate, long before the equinoctial gales, to what we are competent."

La Fayette had, of course, reported his arrival in America to the Cabinet in France, and he had constantly kept them informed of the progress he was making in the development of the plans for the reception of the French troops, as these had been laid down in his official instruc-

[1] 16th July, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 109.

tions. But he carefully avoided in this correspondence with the Government at home any reference to the disappointment he felt at the condition of affairs in America, as to which he could express himself with comparative freedom to those who were near him, within sight of the distress that existed. He admitted, indeed, to M. de Vergennes that the army was not strong, that it was ill clad, and that its artillery was poor; but he declared that he was confident that the States would all join one another now in coming to the rescue, that provisions and the necessaries of life would be provided, and that the militia would respond to this new call, so that when the Comte de Rochambeau arrived upon these shores he would find an army of fourteen or fifteen thousand men ready to cooperate with him, over and above those who were then operating in the South. The tenor of his letters to M. de Vergennes was always that of encouragement and hopefulness when he was pleading the cause of the United States. Even whilst he was in France, his tone of affectionate interest and his anxiety to make the most of what was good in the American character and to deal gently with its weak places, and his repeated assurances as to the patriotism, the courage, and the perseverance of this nation, would almost lead one to believe that his language was that of an American speaking for his kinsmen.

During his stay in Philadelphia, at the middle of May, he had not only presented himself to Congress, as he had been directed by the French Government to do, but had employed every influence within his reach to render more impressive that need for exertions which he so strongly felt himself. He persuaded the Chevalier de La Luzerne to unite with him, and even to deliver a formal address to Congress upon the expected aid from France; and this appeal, coming directly from the minister of His Most Christian Majesty, no doubt had the effect of strengthen-

ing La Fayette's efforts and arguments. We are fortunate enough to have, still preserved in the Archives of France, the report which La Fayette made to M. de Vergennes, from Philadelphia, shortly after his arrival in the United States, of his visit to General Washington at head-quarters, of his presentation to Congress, and of his view of the affairs of the country as he found them upon his return here, which is both interesting as a letter and valuable as an historical document. It was written in cipher, and was deciphered at the French Foreign Office before presentation to M. de Vergennes. It reads as follows:[1]

"PHILADELPHIA, 20 May, 1780.

"A few days after my arrival, Monsieur le Comte, I had the honor to write you by three different opportunities, and I informed you that, after a voyage of thirty-eight days, we had arrived on the 28th of April in the port of Boston. I gave you some account of the present situation of our affairs; and since I have become better acquainted with them, I congratulate myself that I then warned you that I could not answer in any sense for the correctness either of the figures or of the dates.[2]

"It was the 10th of May, after many difficulties caused by the length of the journey and the scarcity of horses, when I arrived at the head-quarters. My first care was to send to M. de la Luzerne his packets and to communicate my instructions to him, with the request that he would direct me as to the manner of fulfilling them. The moment that I met General Washington I announced to him the intention of the King, and I endeavored to comply in every respect with what is contained in my instructions.

"This news had all the more effect upon him because the circumstances of the present time have seriously embarrassed him. To the gratitude which he feels as an American citizen he adds a special and strongly felt obligation for the confidence with which the King has honored him in the disposal of his troops. As he is persuaded that Congress is too numerous to act with prompt-

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 12, No. 34, Original. This document is published in French by M. Doniol in his "Participation de la France," iv. 401, and is reproduced in Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1625.

[2] See letter of 6th May, 1780, from Waterbury, on the road from Boston to the Camp: Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits, i. 332.

ness and discretion, the General has asked that a committee be appointed with such powers as shall enable it to call forth all the resources of America.

"This request was a delicate one, and I decided to confer about it with M. de la Luzerne. He will report to you, Monsieur le Comte, in what general terms, as minister of the King, he made the request to Congress for a special committee; what powers the committee shall have, and what the powers of General Washington shall be in order that he may be spared as much as possible the necessity of communicating with Congress. Thanks to the measures which we owe to the foresight of M. de la Luzerne, the Continental army will be made more stable and the French troops will not fail to have the necessary provisions; without his help, it would have been impossible for the General to obtain from Congress the resolutions which now assure us of having a certain number of troops and the means of subsistence.

"The immense depreciation of the paper money, of which the King's minister will no doubt have informed you, is the great obstacle in the way of the American army. The advantage that the troops of the King will have by paying in gold or in bills of exchange will procure great facilities in everything that relates to them; but, as I had the honor to say in the committee, the high prices have increased to an incredible degree since I left America, and I owe to those who shall be intrusted with this duty the justice to declare that the expenses of every kind cannot be estimated by general ideas or by ordinary calculations.

"The magazines prepared by His Majesty's minister, the appeals which he has made to the State of Connecticut, the orders given to M. Holker in regard to preliminary purchases, are all measures, Monsieur le Comte, upon which he will report to you. But, as he has told me that he has not received from the Department of War or of the Navy detailed instructions upon this head, I have felt myself authorized to submit to him a memorandum in which I have explained to him to the best of my ability the intention of the Government, and I have asked him to direct me as to my conduct in regard to it.

"The American army, Monsieur le Comte, is small in numbers, is poorly clad, and is but moderately provided with artillery; all of which disadvantages are due to the depreciation of the paper money. But we are expecting recruits, and when the troops of the King arrive we hope to have fourteen to fifteen thousand men and some militia, without counting the army of the South. The ideas which I suggested to you in regard to the

employment of M. de Guichen[1] during the winter season proved to be similar to those of General Washington, to whom I did not speak first upon this subject. The General and the few Americans who are in the secret have united their efforts to prove to me that, if our success were uncertain, a visit from M. de Guichen, or a few of his vessels sent during the winter, would make our operations perfectly secure. After having consulted M. de la Luzerne, I thought it my duty to submit to M. de Guichen the opportunities proposed for him, without recommending to him, however, any particular step further than to report to him the opinion of General Washington. You will see by my letter, Monsieur le Comte, that, while doing what I was requested to do, I have added certain alternative suggestions which will enable that officer to consider and to decide for himself.

"If the French troops reach here in time, the chances are that New York is ours. But if the English have time to reunite, we shall have to consider whether to fight that army of fifteen thousand men, if it takes the field, or, what seems to me more probable and more advantageous, to attack a less difficult point than New York.

"We have taken prompt measures to learn the present situation of Halifax and Penobscot. These last places appear to be the object of the General. But in that event he would have to feel himself so strong as not to fear General Clinton in this part of the continent or upon the North River. If the troops do not receive orders at the end of the autumn to move to the West Indies, where they can act offensively during the winter, which orders should be given in advance, I fancy that, as we shall not be able to employ them elsewhere, we shall undertake with them the conquest of Canada, of which General Washington has told me he has some hopes; and I think I foresee with reasonable certainty this project of a winter campaign.

"Without being prejudiced, sir, by the affectionate friendship which attaches me to General Washington, I can answer for it that the French generals and troops will have nothing but praise for his uprightness, for his delicacy, for that frank and noble politeness which characterizes him; whilst at the same time they will admire his great qualities.

"Although I have told him repeatedly that the generals commanding the land forces were quite as subject to his orders as the

[1] The French admiral commanding a fleet at that time in the West Indies.

generals of his own army, you will see by what he has directed me to say to them that he does not intend to make his command either burdensome or arbitrary. The same love of liberty, and a much greater unity, in Congress, a much stronger conviction of the need they have of France in order to achieve their independence, more willingness to accept aid of every kind from her, are the sentiments which I have had the pleasure, sir, to find among my American friends, and Paris may rest assured that they will not abandon us.

"M. de la Luzerne has been kind enough to have quadruplicate copies made, in cipher, of this letter and of my letters to the different French commanders.

"I shall leave everything in his hands, and I intend to go back to-morrow to the army, where M. de Corni is waiting for me to advise him and to assist him in carrying out his orders, for which very good preparatory steps have already been taken, and where General Washington wishes to talk with me about the continuation of our plan of campaign under the various circumstances in which we are likely to find ourselves.

"I have the honor to be, with an affectionate and respectful attachment, Monsieur le Comte, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"LAFAYETTE."

At last the fleet of M. de Ternay was sighted from the coast of America; the signals agreed upon, having been carefully prepared by La Fayette's direction, were placed at the points designated, and the admiral headed his ships for Rhode Island, where he arrived on the afternoon of the 10th of July and came to anchor before Newport. General Heath announced this immediately to General Washington by a letter, of the 11th of July; and on the following day the Comte de Rochambeau wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, placing the detachment officially under his command. The French general declared that, having been assigned to this duty by the King, his master, he arrived now with the most profound feelings of submission, of zeal, and of respect for the person of General Washington as well as for his distinguished talents. Since M. de La Fayette had left France, many disap-

pointments had arisen. The departure of the Comte de Guichen with his fleet for the West Indies had taken away many of the transport ships from Brest which the expedition of M. de Rochambeau had intended to use; these being gone, however, orders had been given, as early as the month of February, to replace them by other transports from Havre, from St.-Malo, and from Bordeaux. But Havre and St.-Malo being blocked by British cruisers, and the ships from Bordeaux having been prevented by head-winds from coming out, the King had determined to send him forward with the first division, composed of as many men as could be safely shipped at Brest. He added that he had found awaiting him at Newport the letters which had been sent there for him by the Marquis de La Fayette to give him the information he required as to the position of the enemy, the military affairs of the country, and the general purposes of the Commander-in-Chief, and said in conclusion, "We are now, sir, under your command."

Although the strength of the Continental army had not been sufficiently increased, at the time of the arrival of the French detachment, to render it fit to undertake any capital operation, General Washington still held to his purpose of making an effort, even though it were desperate and though it strained the forces of the country and of the army to the uttermost, to seize the immense advantage of the present moment; especially because the fleet of Admiral de Ternay now presented the United States a rare opportunity by throwing upon their side the superiority of naval force. He prepared his plan of campaign with this determination, and he wrote to Congress that, having been pressed on all sides by a choice of difficulties, in a moment which required decision, he had adopted that line of conduct which accorded with the dignity and faith of Congress, the reputation of the United States, and the honor of their arms. "I have

sent definite proposals of coöperation to the French general and admiral. Neither the season, nor a regard to decency, would permit delay. The die is cast, and it remains with the States either to fulfil their engagements, preserve their credit, and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat." [1]

Upon the receipt of the letter from M. de Rochambeau, General Washington sent the Marquis de La Fayette, then with him at his head-quarters in Bergen county, New Jersey, to Newport to confer with the Count and the Admiral as to the measures to be adopted. He confided this duty to La Fayette with pleasure, both because of the assurance he felt that he could better than any one else present to the French commanders the position of affairs in the United States, and because of the perfect reliance he had upon his zeal and his attachment to the American cause. He wrote to the Comte de Rochambeau in reference to M. de La Fayette,—

"I have requested him to go himself to New London, where he will probably meet you. As a general officer, I have the greatest confidence in him; as a friend, he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments and opinions. He knows all the circumstances of our army and the country at large. All the information he gives, and all the propositions he makes, I entreat you to consider as coming from me. I request you will settle all arrangements whatsoever with him; and I shall only add, that I shall exactly conform to the intentions of his Most Christian Majesty, as explained in the several papers put into my hands by his order, and signed by his ministers." [2]

La Fayette set out immediately from the head-quarters, and on the 25th of July reached Newport, where he presented himself to the French commanders, according to the order of General Washington contained in the following instructions: [3]

[1] Letter of 22d July, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 120.
[2] 16th July, 1780: Ibid., p. 110.
[3] Ibid., p. 509.

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 15 July, 1780.

"The Marquis de Lafayette will be pleased to communicate the following general ideas to Count de Rochambeau and Chevalier de Ternay, as the sentiments of the underwritten.

"1. In any operation, and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend.

"2. The advantages of possessing the port of New York, by the squadron of France, have been already enumerated to Count de Rochambeau and Chevalier de Ternay, and are so obvious, as not to need recapitulation. A delay in the execution of this enterprise may defeat all our projects, and render the campaign inactive and inglorious.

"3. To render our operations nervous and rapid, it is essential for us to be masters of the navigation of the North River and of the Sound. Without this, our land transportation will be great, our expenses enormous, and our progress slow if not precarious for want of forage and other means.

"4. With these ideas, and upon this ground, it is conceived that many advantages will result from the French squadron's taking possession of the inner harbour between Staten Island and the city of New York, and detaching a frigate or two above the *chevaux-de-frise* in the North River opposite to Fort Washington, for the purpose of opening the navigation of the River, shortening the transportation by land on the upper and lower communication, and bringing the enemy to an explanation respecting Staten Island. Shipping so near the town would, at the same time they cover the frigates in the North River, keep the garrison in check, and be more likely to facilitate other movements of the army, than if they were to remain at the Hook or below the Narrows.

"5. Our operations against the enemy in the city of New York may commence from either of three points, to wit, Morrisania, or the height near Kingsbridge, or Staten Island. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, but, under a full view of all circumstances, the preponderancy is in favor of Morrisania; especially since the aid of his Most Christian Majesty has come by the way of Rhode Island, instead of Cape Henry, as it was expected they would do, and touch at Sandy Hook, in consequence of advices lodged there.

"6. As the means for carrying on our operations are not yet sufficiently appreciated, nor is the time by which our aids will arrive sufficiently ascertained, it is impossible to be precise as to

the time the American troops can with safety rendezvous at Morrisania; but, as it is necessary to fix some epoch, it is hoped that it may happen by the 5th of August. I would propose that day for the reëmbarkation of the French efficient force at New London (if they should have come there), and that they proceed up the Sound to Whitestone on Long Island, or to such other place on that Island, or on the main, as circumstances may require, and the Count shall be advised of. For, the operations against the enemy depending very much upon their holding all or dismantling some of their present posts, and upon contingencies on our side, it is not possible at this time to mark out a precise plan, or determine whether our approaches to the city of New York shall be by the way of York Island, Brooklyn, or both. Numbers must determine the latter, and circumstances of the moment the former.

"7. It must be clearly understood and agreed between the parties, that, if any capital operation is undertaken, the French fleet and land forces will at all events continue their aid until the success of the enterprise, or until it is mutually determined to abandon it.

"8. In all matters of arrangement and accommodation, not repugnant to the foregoing ideas, the Marquis, in behalf of the United States, will consult the convenience and wishes of the Count and Chevalier, and will be pleased to assure them of the disposition I possess to make everything as agreeable to them as possible, and of my desire to manifest on all occasions the high sense I entertain of their merit, and the generous aid they have brought to us.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

But when the Marquis de La Fayette reached Newport, on the 25th of July, the aspect of the French expedition had changed. Admiral Graves, who had come out from Plymouth almost at the moment when M. de Ternay's fleet sailed from Brest, had arrived in American waters with six ships of the line, which he added to the armament under the command of Admiral Arbuthnot at New York, thus restoring the naval superiority once more to the British. There was nothing now for the French to do but to prepare themselves to act upon the defensive in case of their being attacked, of which they were in momentary danger, and to await the arrival

of the second division from France, or of a reinforcement from the squadron in the West Indies, for which the Chevalier de Ternay had immediately sent an appeal to M. de Guichen. La Fayette found, therefore, that the French troops had already been landed upon Rhode Island, where, with the aid of General Heath, who had gone at once to their assistance, and of some five thousand Massachusetts militia, they were taking possession of, and greatly strengthening, the fortifications about Newport and the old works thrown up upon the island by the British, whilst the ships of the fleet were drawn up in front of the main channel.

The advantage which had been given him by the arrival of Admiral Graves was not lost sight of by Sir Henry Clinton; for on the 19th of July his ships of the line and frigates were cruising off the harbor of Newport, blocking the exit of the French fleet. La Fayette's mission, therefore, was stripped of the brilliancy which it would otherwise have possessed if he had come, as it was expected he would, merely to concert on behalf of the American commander the plans which, carried into immediate operation, were to result in destroying the supremacy of Great Britain in America and in putting an end to the war. Admiral de Ternay was thoroughly despondent as to his present situation, and, with a timidity which appears to have been natural to him and which was now greatly increased in view of the unpromising condition of affairs in America, he dreaded not only all the evils which had befallen the Comte d'Estaing, whose example was constantly before his mind, but all those which had even threatened that unlucky expedition. Indeed, he sent home to France reports upon the war that were absolutely devoid of hope for the cause of the American people or for their chances of securing independence.[1]

[1] See Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 373, note.

The Comte de Rochambeau, on the other hand, full of experience in war, and ever ready, with that courage which showed itself in so marked a manner during the campaign of the following year, to help the general whom he had come so far to serve, perceived that the situation was a difficult one, which needed to be treated with the utmost judgment and skill, and that for the present, at least, the land and naval forces of the King ought not to be separated, lest either might thereby be exposed to the danger of attack. He looked upon La Fayette's earnest desire for action as the outcome of the enthusiasm of a youthful mind which took no proper thought of danger; and possibly he may at first have resented the obligation under which the accident of war had placed a lieutenant-general of the King's armies to negotiate with a stripling scarcely older than his own son. Something of this feeling permeates the correspondence which followed. Fortunately, however, Rochambeau was not only a sturdy veteran, he was also an honorable man; his uprightness of purpose enabled him to see that La Fayette was unselfishly striving for the welfare of the common cause, and the momentary difference which sprang up between them was adjusted without leaving any injurious effects behind it. He afterward said, in his narrative of his actions at this time, "I must declare, however, in justification of La Fayette, that he presented to me substantially the opinions of General Washington, and that the latter employed his youth and his ardor to express them with greater energy."[1]

M. de Rochambeau had expressed, in a letter written to La Fayette immediately upon landing at Newport, a strong desire to see General Washington himself and to confer with him personally upon the operations to be undertaken by the allied forces; which desire La Fayette

[1] Mémoires de Rochambeau, i. 248–249.

announced to the Commander-in-Chief by letter whilst he was on his way from the head-quarters to Newport.[1] But the circumstances of the Continental army, and the necessity of Washington's presence at head-quarters, rendered it impossible for the General to make a journey to Newport at that moment; and he said in reply,[2]—

"With respect to the Count's desire of a personal interview with me, you are sensible, my dear Marquis, that there is nothing I should more ardently desire than to meet him; but you are also sensible, that my presence here is essential to keep our preparations in activity, or even going on at all. I entreat you to impress the Count with a proper idea of this matter, and convince him with what pleasure I should hasten to meet him, if it would not be injurious to our affairs. I am persuaded, that, however ardent may be your wishes to undertake the reduction of a certain place, you will not fail to take a candid and full view of the difficulties. We owe it to our allies. We owe it to ourselves."

La Fayette had made every possible effort, in his progress toward Newport, and especially in the State of Connecticut, to induce the authorities to complete their quota of the troops and to hurry them forward, together with such supplies of arms and ammunition as the State could afford. For this purpose he called personally upon Governor Trumbull, General Parsons, Colonel Wadsworth, and many others. His letters to General Washington show that he was at Danbury on the 21st of July, at Hartford on the 22d, at Lebanon on the 23d, and on the 25th at Newport.

Upon his arrival there, he found that the attention of everybody in both camps of the allies was directed toward an attack which was momentarily expected from the British fleet. After the addition of Admiral Graves's force to that of Admiral Arbuthnot, four British ships appeared

[1] From Peekskill, 20th July, 1780: Correspondence of La Fayette, American edition, i. 459.

[2] Washington's letter to La Fayette, 22d July, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 117.

off the harbor of Newport, on the 19th of July. On the following morning three vessels of the French fleet were sent out after them, without being able, however, to overtake them; and two days later, on the 22d, a large armament, consisting of ten British ships of the line and nine smaller vessels, drove the French back into the harbor, took up a position near Block Island, and continued to blockade Admiral de Ternay. It appeared evident that an attack was meditated: intelligence had been received from various sources that Sir Henry Clinton had embarked a large body of troops at New York for an operation against Newport. General Heath had immediately stationed his force, consisting of Colonel Greene's regiment of Continental troops and the recruits now coming in, at Howland's Ferry, Bristol Ferry, and Butt's Hill. He called on the Governor of Rhode Island for fifteen hundred militia, and asked for eight hundred more from Bristol county, in Massachusetts. He also wrote to the Council of Massachusetts requesting that all the militia in the State who could be spared from other service should be sent to Newport; and he made a similar call upon Governor Trumbull for one thousand militia from Connecticut.

As soon as the Marquis de La Fayette reached the head-quarters of the Comte de Rochambeau, he was called upon by the French officers, on account of the knowledge he had acquired of Rhode Island during General Sullivan's operations, to aid them in their plans for defence,—which he entered into with much spirit. It was decided that Canonicut Island should be abandoned, and all the forces concentrated upon Rhode Island. The transports were to be secured in the harbor, and the ships to be stationed there at anchor. The army was to remain encamped until the enemy should appear, and then to move and attack them wherever they should disembark.

La Fayette did not at first believe the reports of the

coming of the British, though he freely gave the assistance asked for by the French general, admitting that so many reports coming in from every direction made it appear as if something must be contemplated by the British, and that, at all events, it would be well to prepare. He reported to General Washington on the 26th of July, "at Seven o'clock P.M.,"[1] that he had been so occupied with these questions as not to be able, up to that time, to discuss the subject which had occasioned his visit to Newport:

"We could not speak of our grand operations, and they are wholly taken in their expectations of the enemy. . . . For my part, I have been a long time a disbeliever of the intelligence; but so many letters came to hand that at length I was forced to take the general opinion about their intended expedition. . . . Nothing as yet (the ships of war excepted) has come in sight; but the French Generals who have not the smallest doubt about their coming, are hurrying their preparations of defence.

"General Heath and myself were invited to a meeting of the French General Officers, wherein, to my great satisfaction, the idea of holding both Connanicut and Rhode Island was abandoned, as it is assured that from the first one the enemy cannot annoy our shipping, if in a certain position. Count de Rochambeau, Chevalier de Chattelux, and myself, went afterwards to dine with the Admiral, and the two French Commanders have agreed to the following plan:

"The transports to be put in the harbour of Newport; the shipping to anchor along the shore from Brenton's Point, going Northward, where they are protected by batteries, a frigate and a cutter to be stationed in Sekonnet Passage; the army to encamp at its usual place, but upon the appearance of the enemy, to be in readiness to attack them at any point where they may disembark, and, if unsuccessful, to retire to the position which was once occupied by the enemy. There they want also to place some militia. Count de Rochambeau cannot hear of the idea of evacuating the island, and says he will defend this post to the last man. I could not help advising him very strongly and very often to erect works, and keep a communication open with the Continent by Howland's

[1] Correspondence of La Fayette, American edition, i. 468.

Ferry or Bristol Point; that matter will, I hope, be attended to in the course of the next day.

"General Heath will inform you of the measures he has taken, in which, as the second officer, I am only to help him to the best of my power. The Count's urging request made it, I think, necessary to call for Militia.

"The number of sick is such that by the return given before me to Count de Rochambeau, it appears they will have but three thousand six hundred men fit for duty if they are attacked within a few days. The fleet has a great proportion of sick men and the ships are therefore poorly manned for the present."

The French general was evidently in serious alarm at that moment on account of the situation of the fleet and the troops, which seemed to him all the more critical because he was a total stranger to the coast and the adjacent country, and had been shut in so quickly after his arrival from a long sea-voyage that neither he nor his officers had had time to become familiar with their surroundings. He hoped that General Washington would send him assistance from the Continental army; he urged this in his conversations with La Fayette, who added, in his letters of the 26th of July,—

"If the enemy mean regular approaches the French Generals say that they would give time for a succour to come. In all suppositions I don't think the French will be able to form a junction before some time, as they can't leave the Island before the fifteenth of next month, (in supposing that they are not attacked.) . . . Count de Rochambeau asked me so often if you would not send a body of Continental troops to their relief; if, in the course of twelve days from this they could not be arrived, or that I knew he wanted me to write to you about it, and at length he told me he did not want it. But this must be *between us*. The Count says he will stand a storm; but if the enemy wanted to make a long work of it that a corps of Continental troops in their rear would have the best effects. That in this case the enemy would be much exposed on the Island, and that the circumstances which would follow their re-embarking would be so fatal to them as to facilitate our operations for the campaign. All this, my dear General, I was in a private manner desired to hint to you."

This letter reached General Washington on the 30th of July, as he was moving his army forward to the Hudson River, with the view of making a diversion against New York with all his force as soon as it should have been definitively ascertained that the British commander had weakened his garrison by detaching a large number of ships and men to operate against Newport. He replied on the 31st, from "Robinson's, in the Highlands,"[1] that there was no doubt Sir Henry Clinton intended to attack the Comte de Rochambeau, and that a considerable force had sailed for that purpose. He could not help wishing that the French general had taken post upon the mainland, and he even suggested that, if it were not too late, this might yet be done; because he would derive there much greater support from the country, and the island of Rhode Island was not an object for which to put anything of importance to hazard. In regard to his sending aid from the Continental army, he said that he did not think that any succor from his army could reach Rhode Island in time, on account of the great distance that lay between, and even if it were to be attempted by a rapid march, a great part of the men detached would be unfit for service when they arrived; besides, he continued, in the present state of things, he did not know how they would be subsisted with bread. These considerations, therefore, left him but one line of conduct, which was to move against New York. He was making every effort to accomplish that, and he said that that appeared to him to be the most probable mode of relieving M. de Rochambeau, the only practicable one, indeed, so far as relief from his army was concerned.

La Fayette had written to the Commander-in-Chief that, until he should receive instructions from him, he would remain at Newport under General Heath's orders,

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 128.

to help him to the best of his ability. To this Washington replied, "With respect to your remaining with General Heath, you will use your own pleasure in the matter. Wherever you are, your best services will be rendered and will be interesting."

General Washington had immediately set his army in motion in the direction of New York. He had advanced to Peekskill on the 1st of August, and upon the following day the whole army was to have taken up its line of march, when news came to the head-quarters from Long Island Sound that upon the preceding day the fleet of transports had put back and were steering westward.

Sir Henry Clinton had, in fact, embarked six thousand of his troops upon the transports at Frog's Neck, on the 27th of July, for the purpose of a joint operation of his land and naval forces against the French at Newport. His enterprise had been accompanied, however, with considerable delay; the French had been actively engaged in preparing their defence; and by the time the British were well started up the Sound there was no longer much likelihood that the post could be carried by assault; it certainly could not be surprised. There appears to have been some disagreement of opinion between Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot as to the manner of conducting the operation; and after the troops were embarked, in readiness to be transported to the scene of action, Sir Henry Clinton decided to abandon the enterprise. Crossing the Sound to Huntington Bay, he disembarked his men at White Stone, on the 31st of July, and returned to New York.[1]

But there is reason to believe that it was not merely his disagreement with the admiral that caused the British commander to turn aside from the operation he had planned; for it is exceedingly probable that General

[1] Letter of Sir Henry Clinton in *The Remembrancer*, x. 260.

Washington's rapid march toward New York warned him of the danger he incurred in that direction by withdrawing so large a force from the garrison there, and led him to turn his attention to preserving that post, which was of much greater importance than it would have been to defeat the French or to capture Rhode Island. Admiral Arbuthnot continued to cruise off Newport, in order to blockade the French fleet and intercept the second division which was then expected almost daily from France.

General Washington recrossed the Hudson River, so as to be in a better position, on the western side, near Dobbs's Ferry, to secure provisions and forage; and the great difficulty of maintaining a large body of men in the impoverished condition of the country led to the discharge of the militia who had been summoned to Newport, except the men enlisted for three months.

CHAPTER XX.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LA FAYETTE AND THE FRENCH COMMANDERS — THE HARTFORD CONFERENCE —ARNOLD'S TREASON.

THE fear of immediate attack having passed, La Fayette was now able to begin the discussion with the Comte de Rochambeau and the admiral of the business upon which he had gone to Rhode Island. The first interview for that purpose took place, evidently at M. de Rochambeau's head-quarters in Newport, on the 30th of July. On the following day La Fayette reported it to General Washington, as follows:[1]

"NEWPORT, July the 31st, 1780.

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—In consequence of a note from me the Admiral came to last evening, and defensive ideas gave way to offensive plans. Our conversation was long, and it is not yet ended, but I hasten to write you a summary report of what past between the Count, the Chevalier, and myself.

"I first began, in my own name, to give them a pretty exact account of the situation we were in three months ago, of the supernatural efforts which the country had made for the purpose of an immediate co-operation. I told them that by the 1st of January our army would be dismissed, that the Militia was only to serve for three months. I added, that for the defensive they were useless to us; nay, they were hurtful, and that I thought it necessary to take New York before the winter. All that, my dear General, was said in my own name, and therefore in a less delicate way than when I am your interpreter.

"I then told them that I was going to speak of you, and after many compliments, assurances of confidence, &c., I went on with your plan, beginning with the importance of possessing the har-

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 475.

bour, and going on about the three ways which you have directed me to point out as to be hereafter regulated by circumstances.

"As to the possessing of the harbour the Chevalier told that he did not believe his ships might go in; but that if superior at sea, he would answer by cruising off to protect the landing, the transportation, and prevent an evacuation; indeed to blockade the harbour.

"The French General, with the advice of the Naval Commander did not hesitate to prefer the going in transports to the point you know of. Both were of opinion that nothing could be undertaken unless we had a naval superiority, and as I know it is your opinion also, (tho' it is not mine,) I durst not insist on that article.

"There was another reason which made me wait for the reinforcement. I knew we had neither arms nor powder. I know we would be at least a long time to get them; but as they did not think of making me the objection I put my assent to the others on the account of my private confidence in their superior abilities; told them that you also thought we should have a naval superiority, and added, in my own name, that however, we must, any how, act before the winter, and get rid of a shameful defensive.

"The summary of the arrangement will, I presume, be this: That as soon as we hear of a naval reinforcement we go where you know, and establish what you intend to fix; that, if possible, we get where I want you to be; that immediately the French will embark and go where you wish them to be, or there about; that a number equal to the enemy's whole force be stationed in that part; that they don't want there more than ten pieces of our heavy cannon; that after everything will be disembarked, three weeks, in their opinion, will do the business on their side; that proper means will be taken by sea to keep up the communication and prevent an evacuation; that we must not give up that plan if we may begin in August or September; that fascines and other apparatus must be ready on the opposite shore; that they will take for us all the boats belonging to the Continent which will be at Providence; that as soon as our clothing &c. arrive, it will without entering any harbour be sent to W. C. or thereabout.

"Their superiority at sea, will, I think, take place in the course of this month; they have two ways to depend upon it: 1st, Unless of an absolute impossibility, the second division, consisting of four other regiments and the remaining part of Lauzun's, with the Alliance and all other stores, and with a strong convoy of ships of the line, will be here very soon. When they will be

heard of on the coast, Chevalier de Ternay will, at all events, go out and meet them. 2dly, The Gentleman I wrote to on my arrival[1] has full liberty to send here reinforcements, the Admiral has already applied to him, but I am going to make him write other letters *in my way*, and will send them tomorrow or the day after to Chevalier de la Luzerne, whom I beg you will immediately desire to secure three fast sailing vessels for the West Indies.

"I am going this evening to fix plans with Pilots, and also to speak of the entrance of the harbour. Dobs and Shaw[2] are here, and I will have a full conversation with them and the Admiral, both for the entrance of the harbour and the navigation of the Sound. Tomorrow I call, with as much secrecy as possible, a number of Pilots for the harbour of Halifax and River St. Laurence.

"Inclosed, you will find a letter from Count de Rochambeau. He requests you will have the goodness of letting the Minister know what the French army is about, as he had no time of writing to him; it is, I believe, very important.—1st, To send everywhere to meet the reinforcement, and give them proper directions. 2dly, To have some vessels ready for the West Indies.

"The French set more value upon Rhode Island than it is worth. I however got them to promise that in case of an operation they will not leave here a Garrison, and that their Magazines would be sent to Providence.

"You know, my dear General, I did not expect Clinton, and tho' I could not stand alone in my opinion, I ever lamented the calling out of the Militia. I am happy to inform you that they have been dismissed. Nothing can equal the spirit with which they turned out, and I did not neglect letting the French know that they have done more for their allies than they would have done for the security of their own continental troops on a similar occasion.

"As to the three month men, the French General wants them to establish the communication with the main; but I will soon request him to let them go to the grand army, and will, in the same time, get from this State as many arms and powder as possible. I have written to Massachusetts for the same purpose. After I will have sent the Pilots, and made calculations with the Commander of the Artillery and the first Engineer, whom the Count will consult, I shall draw a plan which I will get their

[1] Probably the Comte de Guichen, commanding the fleet in the West Indies.
[2] Pilots.

answer to, and repair with it to head-quarters. In the meantime I will receive answers from Boston and from Governor Greene.

"The Admiral cannot send to us more than thirty thousand of powder. But you see that their demands as to heavy pieces are small; they indeed say they do not want any on the Island, and that their twenty-ones will be sufficient. All that, my dear General, I will be more positive upon after the Commanders of Artillery and Engineers will have made with us their calculations. I hope, my dear General, that by the 5th or 6th of August, I will have nothing more to do in this place.

"The French army hate the idea of staying here, and want to join you; they swear at those that speak of waiting for the second division; they are enraged to be blockaded in this harbour. As to the dispositions of the inhabitants and our troops, and the dispositions of the inhabitants and the Militia for them, they are such as I may wish. You would have been glad the other day to see two hundred and fifty of our drafts that came on Connanicut without provisions or tents, and who were mixed in such a way with the French troops that every French soldier and officer took an American with him and divided their bed and their supper in the most friendly manner.

"The patience and sobriety of our Militia is so much admired by the French officers, that two days ago a French Colonel called all his officers together to desire them to take the good examples which were given to the French soldiers by the American troops. So far are they gone in their admirations that they find a great deal to say in favor of General Varnum, and his escort of Militia Dragoons, who fill up all the streets of Newport. On the other hand, the French discipline is such, that chiken and pigs walk between the tents without being disturbed, and that there is in the camp a cornfield, from which not one leaf has been touched. The Tories don't know what to say to it.

"Adieu, my dear General. Tomorrow, I hope having the pleasure of writing you another letter, and I am with the most tender friendship, dear General,

"Your most obedient humble servant:

"LAFAYETTE."

The most serious disappointment connected with the arrival of the French first division only, instead of the whole detachment as had been intended, was that the large quantities of arms and munitions of war, and especially

the clothing for the Continental army, of which the Marquis de La Fayette had directed the manufacture at Nantes for at least fifteen thousand men, had unfortunately been left behind to come along with the second division. It mortified La Fayette to discover this upon his arrival at Newport and to report it to General Washington. The General replied, "The blunders which have been made with respect to arms, ammunition and clothing, are serious disappointments. I think, however, from a closer inspection of our means, that we shall be able to collect nearly arms enough to put into the hands of our recruits, and powder enough to undertake the enterprise, if in the course of the operation we can depend on the fifty tons expected from France, and can obtain fifty tons more from the fleet." He added that he did not wish La Fayette to press the French general and admiral to anything to which they showed a disinclination, especially to the withdrawal of their troops from Rhode Island before the second division should arrive to give them a naval superiority; because, if they should yield to importunity and an accident should happen, they would lay the blame on those who had persuaded them. He therefore cautioned him to inform them only as to what the Americans could do and were willing to undertake, allowing the French commanders to consult their own inclination as to the rest; for he felt that the prospect at that moment was not sufficiently flattering to justify an urgent presentation of his views to them. He continued his preparations in the mean time, however, in the hope that the second division would arrive in time to enable the army to begin active operations by the 1st of September; though after that time he considered that there could be very little expectation of effecting the object.[1]

Whilst La Fayette was engaged in this negotiation at

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 135.

Newport, General Washington prepared a command for him as soon as he should return to the main army, although he had given him permission to remain with General Heath as long as it pleased him to do so. This command was the corps of light infantry, which he formed on the 1st of August and which during the absence of General de La Fayette he placed under Major-General St. Clair. The corps was made up of six battalions, each composed of eight companies selected from the different lines of the army; and the battalions were separated into two brigades, of which General Hand commanded one and General Poor the other. The post of the light infantry was always in advance of the main army.

On the 7th of August, La Fayette returned to the head-quarters at Peekskill and took command of his corps. After having seen General Washington and informed him of what had taken place at the conferences at Newport, he wrote a formal statement to the Comte de Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay, reviewing the conversations which had taken place between them, with the conclusions they had reached; and, as a matter of precaution in case active measures should afterward be undertaken conjointly by the allied forces, he recapitulated his understanding of the views of those gentlemen as to what was feasible and as to what they would be willing to undertake. It is so definite a narrative of this important negotiation with which General Washington had intrusted La Fayette, and illustrates so well the industry and care with which this young officer performed his duty, that it is given here in his own words:[1]

"In Camp beyond Dobbs's Ferry, 9th August, 1780.

"Sirs:—Two days ago I arrived at the head-quarters, and in accordance with the mission which I had undertaken, my first care

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 345. See also the original MS. Letter Books of the Comte de Rochambeau, in the Library of Congress, at Washington.

was to report our conversations. But the smallest details of these are so important, and the fate of America, as well as the glory of France, depends to such an extent upon the measures which we may adopt here, that, in order to feel still more certain that I have fully understood you, I shall submit to you a synopsis of our interviews and shall beg you to inform me immediately whether I have accurately caught your meaning. I should have taken this precaution, sirs, before leaving Newport, if General Washington's march upon New York had not recalled me to my division at the very moment when, by our ulterior arrangements, you required some information.

"1st. I laid before you the present situation of America, the exhausted condition in which I found it, the efforts which it has made at this juncture, and which could only have been induced by the hope of being freed, once for all, from the tyranny of England.

"I told you that these efforts were enormous, considering the state of our finances and the impoverishment of all our resources, and that I do not expect to see them renewed during another campaign. I added that by the 1st of November we should have no more militia, and that by the 1st of January the half of our Continental army would be discharged; and I ventured to say, in my own name, that I think it politically necessary to act during the present campaign, of which I have been more fully convinced, on my road here, by testing the feelings of the people.

"2d. I confirmed what I had already had the honor of reporting to you as to the Continental troops and the militia whom we should have with us. I told you that, estimating the strength of the enemy in New York at fourteen thousand men, of whom ten thousand are regulars and four thousand rather poor militia, I thought we exaggerated their number somewhat, and that we ought first to deduct the sailors employed by Admiral Arbuthnot. As to the fortifications, I told you that the American troops would take charge of New York, and that the fort of Brooklyn, where you could operate in concert with a division of our army, is simply an earth-work of four bastions, with a ditch and a shed, containing from a thousand to fifteen hundred men, and having in front of it a small out-work where no more than a hundred could be sheltered. I added that nothing would prevent a regular approach to Brooklyn, and that that post is the key to New York.

"3d. I informed you of General Washington's plan, and I told you the moment you were able to begin your march he would move to Morrisania, where, as I now repeat, he will place bat-

teries which will close the passage of Hell's Gate and make sure of the one between the continent and Long Island, so that there will be nothing to fear from the enemy's ships. Whilst awaiting your arrival, sirs, our army would intrench itself either at Morrisania, or, if possible, upon the island of New York, and would prepare to detach a corps of troops as soon as you should approach us, coming either by land to Westchester and passing thence under cover of our batteries, or by sea to Wistown or any other harbor in that neighborhood. General Washington would detach a sufficient corps of Americans, with fifteen pieces of heavy cannon, to co-operate with your troops, and he believes that with these forces and this artillery united, we should soon have possession of the point of Brooklyn, and consequently of the city of New York.

"4th. I represented to you that Long Island is a fertile country, where, in spite of the depredations of the English, there still remain some resources; that we were sure to be joined there by the militia of the island; and finally that by the aid of our sub-batteries at Morrisania, and still more by a battery upon the island of New York, we should assure the communication between Long Island and the continent. In view of these circumstances it is my personal opinion that the action should be begun, if we could provide for the safety of the fleet, before we obtain the naval superiority.

"5th. I strongly insisted upon the necessity of having possession of the port of New York as soon as possible. I requested M. le Chevalier de Ternay to consider this point with the pilots whom I sent to him; and, in view of the immense advantages of that move, I hoped that, either with the aid of land forces from the direction of Sandy Hook or merely by his own naval superiority, he would be in a position to accomplish that which we feared he might undertake when we were expecting him at the same time with Admiral Graves.

"6th. In suggesting to you to send your magazines to Providence, I said that Rhode Island is of no value to the Americans, but that it is important in connection with the succors coming from France, provided, of course, that it does not require an army to guard it; that, if the English should make the mistake of seizing it, a superior fleet, assisted from the continent, would be able to retake it at any time.

"7th. I had the honor of saying to you, in conclusion, sirs, that, in order to operate against New York, it would be necessary to begin at latest toward the first days of September; and, after

that explanation, I told you that General Washington, having the most complete confidence in you, asked only to have your opinion upon this subject, and that he did not wish to undertake anything which you should not consider advantageous.

"This is, sirs, what I had the honor of saying to you; and here is what you did me the honor to reply:

"1st. That the succor sent to the United States was anything but temporary; that the second division was intended to start a short time after you, and that we might expect it to arrive at any moment; that it would bring at least two thousand five hundred men, and probably a larger number; that it was to be convoyed by three vessels, but that according to all appearances more would be sent; that the only cause which could prevent it from reaching here before the 1st of September would be the impossibility of uniting the French and Spanish squadrons, and that in the latter event it would arrive at least by the end of the autumn, and would then be much stronger; that M. de Guichen has been informed of our plans and has had orders to facilitate them; that, consequently, M. le Chevalier de Ternay has written him for the five vessels promised us, and that from all these premises you hoped to act before the end of the campaign, but that you had no doubt, at all events, of furnishing a very superior force for next winter and for the campaign of next year.

"2d. The project of attacking Brooklyn was entirely satisfactory to you, and it appeared to you the proper method of reducing New York; but you considered that we ought to have upon that island a force at least equal to that which the enemy could oppose to us; and you added that, by leaving a mask at New York, they might fall upon the corps on Long Island with almost their whole army, which, as you see, had already been anticipated by General Washington.

"3d. You appeared to me to doubt the possibility of checking the enemy by the passage of Morrisania; but that is a point upon which I shall be able to give you decisive information. The idea of proceeding by land to Westchester seemed less agreeable to you than that of going by sea to some bay on Long Island. As to the disembarkation, M. le Comte de Rochambeau considers it a very long operation, and he estimates that, from his experience, it will require nearly three weeks to set an army ashore with all its campaign and siege equipment. You asked to have all the information possible about Brooklyn, in order to prepare your calculations for the engineering and the artillery.

"4th. You appeared to me to consider naval superiority neces-

sary, even at the beginning of our operations; though it may be that this idea is derived from your doubts about the communication by Morrisania.

"5th. M. le Chevalier de Ternay considers it difficult to capture the port of New York, and hopes to produce the same effect by cruising outside it. He does not believe that his ships of seventy-four can go in; but to the difference of opinion which I ventured to express, at least as to the importance of occupying the harbor, he replied that he should give that subject further consideration. As to his method of protecting the disembarkation, he proposed to cruise in the Sound, and his frigates would go, with one or two ships, into the bay where it was intended to land the troops.

"6th. The island of Rhode Island appeared to you a very important point to hold; though, if M. de Ternay obtains the naval superiority, you believe, as we do, that it will not be necessary to leave a garrison there during the attack upon New York. M. le Comte de Rochambeau directed me to assure General Washington that whenever he should receive an order he would proceed immediately to the point which the Commander-in-Chief should indicate. I have also told him that the French generals are desirous of having an interview with him.

"In terminating our conversation, we definitively agreed upon the following articles, which I have therefore reported to General Washington.

"1st. You have written to France to hasten and to increase our succor from there; you have already asked for five ships from M. de Guichen, and I have taken charge of another letter which repeats the same request and will be forwarded through M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne.

"2d. Immediately upon the announcement to you that the vessels have arrived, either those of the second division or those from the West Indies, you will send a messenger to General Washington; and whilst our army is marching to Westchester, and yours is preparing to embark, M. de Ternay will endeavor to effect his junction.

"3d. If the French fleet be equal to that of the enemy, it will fight for the superiority at once; if it be superior, it will take the French troops from Rhode Island immediately and will proceed to the bay selected for the disembarkation.

"4th. A point shall be selected from which the ships may be able to cover the operation; where the head of the first column may have a field of action supported by the fire from the ships,

and behind which the rest of the army may come up; where, by throwing forward all the troops who have been landed, we shall still have our right and our left supported, so that we may cover those disembarking. A place shall be selected which is so situated that the American army corps detached for this particular expedition may approach and land at the same moment with M. le Comte de Rochambeau, and that their commander may co-operate at once with the French generals.

"5th. According to the number of the French troops in condition for active service, General Washington will either send, or will lead himself, to Long Island, a number of troops equal to the army which the enemy shall oppose to them; and he will station a corps of about the same strength either at Westchester or upon the island of New York.

"6th. M. le Chevalier de Ternay will carefully consider the possibility of forcing the passage of Sandy Hook; and, if he finds it practicable, he will accomplish that important object at once.

"7th. As soon as the arms, the clothing, and the munitions of war, belonging to the United States, shall arrive, M. le Chevalier de Ternay will have the goodness, without giving them time to enter the harbor, to have them convoyed at once by a number of frigates, or, if the batteries shall not have been placed in position, then by a ship of the line, to whatever point on the Sound General Washington may indicate.

"8th. The French fleet will take charge of the boats which we shall need and which will be delivered to it at Providence; it will lend us all the powder that it can spare: it cannot at this moment lend us more than thirty thousand.

"9th. I shall send to the French generals accurate information as to the passage into the Sound by Hell's Gate; I shall communicate to them also all the details relating to Brooklyn, and they will thereupon send us all the calculations as to the artillery and the fortification, according to which we shall provide whatever it may be necessary to send with the American corps to Long Island for those branches of the service. The two points of this ninth article gave rise to some doubt in the minds of the French generals, and I shall send them from here information relating to the subject upon which I had the honor to speak to them.

"10th. The sick, the magazines, etc., will be sent to Providence, and we shall put the batteries in good order along that river.

"11th. It is clearly understood that the moment we obtain

the naval superiority, the French must not lose a single day in beginning their co-operation.

"This is, sirs, a synopsis of my report to General Washington; and, since it will serve as the basis for his preparations, as well as a rule for future explanations which you may receive; since, in view of the confidence he has reposed in me, it is my duty to establish definitively every agreement that I can possibly arrive at with you; and since the fate of America appears to depend upon your activity or your inaction during the rest of the present summer, I deem it of the greatest importance that your ideas should be faithfully communicated to him, and I beg you now to lose no time in writing me a few words to assure me that I have fully understood you.

"A short time after my departure, sirs, you probably heard that General Clinton, who was alarmed about New York, was obliged by the movement of our army to shut himself up in that island. The army is now near Dobbs's Ferry, ten miles above King's Bridge, on the right bank of the North River, and our advanced guard is about three miles ahead.

"If General Clinton decides to fight us with equal advantage of numbers and position, we shall give him an opportunity to do so, and he will then be able to make an entirely impartial trial of British and Hessian troops against the Americans.

"I shall await here, sirs, with anxiety, your reply to this letter. I shall have the honor of communicating to you the various advices which General Washington may desire to have sent to you. We need the first news of the vessels to give us peace of mind; and, from an intimate knowledge of our situation, I assure you, sirs, as an individual and in my own name, that it is important for us to act during the present campaign, and that all the troops whom you may expect from France next year, as well as all the plans with which you may flatter yourselves, will not repair the fatal consequences of our inaction now. Without the resources of America, all the foreign assistance will accomplish nothing in this country; and although, under all circumstances, you may count upon us implicitly, I consider it important that you should take advantage of the moment when you find here present a co-operation without which you will be able to accomplish nothing in America for the common cause.

"I have the honor to be etc.—

"P.S. Such is, sirs, the long official letter which I have had the honor to write to you: I cannot allow it to go without thank-

ing you for the kindness that you showed me at Rhode Island or without assuring you of my sincere attachment."

This letter led to an unexpected and exceedingly interesting correspondence, which threw into relief, to a remarkable degree, the manliness of La Fayette's attitude toward both the French troops and the Continental army, between whom he had, in a certain sense, taken up a position which he was now perfectly able and perfectly willing to defend. The letters which followed are valuable, because they show how thoroughly earnest and single-minded he was in all the steps that he took in his efforts to forward the American cause; how, even in his relations with his own countrymen and with the commanding officers of the French detachment, while he was always a loyal and devoted Frenchman, he was also always the champion and the friend of America; and how he was ever ready, in her interest, to defend the measures which he thought to be right and advantageous.

M. de Rochambeau was irritated by La Fayette's carefully worded reproduction of the conversations which he and the admiral had held with him; possibly he felt it to be a slight that General Washington did not communicate directly with him, instead of doing so through this young Frenchman, whose influence in America may have seemed to the French general quite great enough already, and who was certainly upon the verge of exciting jealousy among some of his fellow-countrymen in the fleet. At all events, La Fayette's synopsis of their interviews had reproduced exactly the substance of their several arguments and understandings, so that there was nothing amiss with that; but the Comte de Rochambeau, with the appearance of a man who expects to be offended rather than of one who has actually received offence, seized upon a phrase relating to Newport

which was of no consequence, and, in a somewhat petulant mood, wrote the following letter to La Fayette:[1]

"NEWPORT, 12 August, 1780.

"I have received, my dear Marquis, the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 9th of August. You will permit me to refer you for my answer to the letter which I had the honor of writing to our general on the 10th of this month, in order to lay before him my opinion, which you asked of me on his behalf. I restrict myself therefore to waiting for his final orders, and I beg of him as a favor to appoint a rendezvous where the admiral and I may go and receive from him verbally, at an interview, some definite plan; we should accomplish more in a quarter of an hour than in a multitude of despatches. I am convinced, more than any one in the world, of what you say, that his march held back Clinton, who really intended to come here and attack us; but I wish to observe to you, at the same time, that there is every reason to believe that he would have been thoroughly beaten here, and that, in the mean time, our General would have taken New York.

"In regard to your suggestion, my dear Marquis, that the position of the French in Rhode Island is of no service to the Americans, I shall observe to you:

"1st. That I have never yet heard that it has done them any harm;

"2d. That it would be well to reflect that the position of the French corps may easily have had something to do with Clinton's evacuation of the mainland, and with his confining himself to Long Island and New York; also that, while the French fleet is guarded here by a superior and concentrated naval force, your coasts of America are undisturbed, your privateers make valuable captures, and your merchant marine is entirely free. It seems to me that under such comfortable circumstances it ought not to be difficult to wait for the increase of both naval and land forces which the King assured me he intended to send; and finally, that, as I have not had a letter from France since I left there, I cannot but flatter myself that the second division has started, and is bringing me despatches; because if it had been blockaded by some superior force I should have had word sent to me from the coasts of France. I am afraid of these Savannahs and other similar events of which I have seen so many in the course of my

[1] Rochambeau MS. Letter Books, Library of Congress; Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 357.

life.[1] It is a principle in war, as in geometry, that *vis unita fortior*. But, in a word, I am awaiting orders from my Generalissimo, and I beg him to grant to the admiral and me an interview. I shall join the latter's despatch to this packet as soon as he sends it to me.

"I send you, my dear Marquis, the tenderest greetings of my heart.

"LE COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU."

The tone of this letter surprised and disappointed La Fayette. He had been laboring in good faith to advance the interests of the allies in the common cause; and, when he felt satisfied that he had not omitted any detail which his duty obliged him to consider, he saw himself in danger of being misinterpreted by the very men who ought to have understood him best,—the French general and the admiral of the fleet. He replied, on the 18th of August, in a letter addressed to them jointly,[2] saying that, instead of complaining of their interpretation of his meaning, he preferred to assume that he had imperfectly explained himself; he told them, therefore, that upon his return to the head-quarters General Washington had asked him for an account of his interviews, because since Washington had given him full authority to discuss the campaign with them, he naturally desired to know what he had said to them and what they said in return; that General Washington thought the best way for him to present this report was to put it into writing, but that he, La Fayette, fearing that he might possibly utter a single word not in accordance with their understanding, had decided that it would be not only safer, but also more respectful to them, if he submitted directly to them a copy of the report which he made to the General. Therefore he had done so. As to the position of the French at

[1] This refers to the unsuccessful attack upon Savannah by the combined French and American forces under Admiral d'Estaing and General Lincoln in October, 1779.

[2] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 359.

Rhode Island, in respect to which M. de Rochambeau appeared to be excessively sensitive, La Fayette continued,—

"When, after three letters from General Washington and twenty conversations with him, I felt bound to tell you from what point of view we look upon Rhode Island, I never thought of saying to you that your presence there was injurious to any one. And as to the advantage of having in America a French squadron and French troops, allow me to suggest to you, sirs, that M. d'Estaing always found me ready to prove the truth of this proposition; that for the last eighteen months, and particularly since the beginning of last summer, I have carried on a continuous correspondence with the French Government for the purpose of showing them the advantage of such a measure; and that, although the gratitude of the Americans does not need to be excited, very few hours go by in which I do not employ a part of my time in representing the advantages which you secure for them even in your inferiority, and in which I do not take pains to have this truth repeated from Canada to Florida, as I can prove to you by the few copies that I have kept of my letters."

He said, further, that whilst he had ventured to express himself upon political matters, in which he now admitted that he had made a mistake, the opinions which he had advanced were confirmed not only by the views of the Chevalier de La Luzerne, but by General Washington also. He accompanied this official explanation by a letter of the same date to the Comte de Rochambeau personally:[1]

"In Camp, 18 August, 1780.

"After having written to you, Monsieur le Comte, a joint letter addressed also to M. le Chevalier de Ternay, permit me to come to you with all the confidence of that affectionate friendship which I have felt toward you, and which I have endeavored to express to you, from my tenderest childhood. Although the expressions of your letter manifest your usual kindness of feeling toward me, certain portions of its contents, which are not indeed personal to me, show me that my last letter gave you displeasure. After four months in which I have exerted myself night and day to prepare

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 362.

men's minds to receive you, to respect you, and to love you; after all that I have done to make known the advantages of your presence in Rhode Island, and after having used my influence in addressing the people as to this truth; finally, Monsieur le Comte, after all that my patriotism and my feeling toward you have dictated, I cannot help being pained when I see you give to my letter so unfavorable an interpretation and one that I never dreamed of. If in the course of that letter I have displeased you or given you offence, if you disapprove, for instance, of the written report which General Washington asked me for, and which I felt it my duty to submit to you, I give you my word of honor that I thought I was doing a simple thing; so simple, indeed, that I should have felt I was doing you a wrong not to have submitted it to you.

"If you had heard people talking of this second division, Monsieur le Comte, as I have, if you knew to what extent the English and the Tories are trying to persuade people that France merely wants to stir up the fire without extinguishing it, you would understand that my longing to silence such reports makes me perhaps too eager. I will admit to you, in confidence, that it hurts my feelings, in the midst of a foreign country, to see the French blockaded at Rhode Island; and the mortification that I feel makes me anxious for active operations. As to what you have said to me about Rhode Island, Monsieur le Comte, if you could know in detail what I have said, written, and published in the newspapers, if you had seen me often, surrounded by a band of American country-people, describing the conduct of the French at Newport, if you could only spend three days here with me, you would see the injustice of such a reproach.

"If I have offended you, I ask your pardon for two reasons: first, because I am earnestly attached to you; and secondly, because my purpose is to do everything here that I can to please you. In every place where I am only a private citizen, your orders shall be the law for me; and I should make any sacrifice for the most humble of the Frenchmen who are here, rather than not contribute to their glory, their pleasure, and their union with the Americans. These are my sentiments, Monsieur le Comte, and although you have suspected me of entertaining some that are far different from those I really have at heart, I overlook that injustice and I remember only my attachment to you.

"P.S. I am very far from thinking, Monsieur le Comte, that I deserve the least credit for the opinion which people have here of

you and of the officers of your army; such conceit is very far from me; but, at all events, I had the advantage of knowing you personally, and I had that also of predicting what occurred upon your arrival and of reflecting the sentiments of those who are in your immediate following. I am entirely convinced, and no one here can deny it, that if you had not come, it would have gone badly with American affairs during the present campaign. But, in our condition at this moment, that is not enough; we need to have a definite advantage. Believe me that when I intimated this to you *in my own name*, it was not my opinion alone. My mistake was that I wrote with great earnestness, in an official document, certain things that you would have forgiven me for, on account of my youth, if I had expressed myself as a friend, and privately, to you. But I was acting with such perfect good faith that your reply has surprised me as much as it has distressed me, which is saying a great deal."

This manly declaration disarmed the resentment of the Comte de Rochambeau, who evidently had at heart no ill will toward La Fayette; and, with a frankness and kindliness of spirit which do honor to his memory, he wrote the following letter, which brought the incident to a close:[1]

"NEWPORT, 27 August, 1780.

"Allow an old father [*un vieux père*], my dear Marquis, to answer you as he would an affectionate son whom he loves and infinitely cherishes. You know me well enough to believe that I do not require to be excited; that at my age, when one has reached a conclusion based upon military reasons and reasons of state, to which one has been driven by circumstances, all the appeals in the world cannot make me change it unless I have an express order from my General. But I am fortunate enough, as he tells me in his despatches, to have my ideas agree substantially with his own as to all the measures by which we might convert this into an offensive operation, and that we differ only upon some minor points, from which the slightest explanation, and certainly his orders, will remove all difficulty. You are mortified, as a Frenchman, my dear friend, at seeing a British squadron, with a decided superiority of ships of the line and

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress; Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 365.

frigates, blockade here the squadron of the Chevalier de Ternay; but console yourself, my dear Marquis, the port of Brest has been blockaded for two months by a British fleet which has prevented the second division from coming out under the convoy of M. de Bougainville. If you had been through the last two wars, you would have heard of nothing but these blockades. But I hope that M. de Guichen, on the one hand, and M. de Gaston, on the other, will avenge us for this temporary disappointment.

"It is always right, my dear Marquis, to believe that the French are invincible, but I shall confide to you a great secret, after an experience of forty years: there are no troops so easily beaten when they have once lost confidence in their leaders, and they lose it immediately when they discover that they have been exposed to danger in consequence of private and personal ambition. If I have been fortunate enough to retain their confidence until now, I owe it to the most scrupulous examination of my own conscience; to the fact that, of the fifteen thousand men, or thereabout, who have been either killed or wounded under me in the different grades and in the most sanguinary engagements, I have not to reproach myself with having caused the death of a single man for my own personal advantage.

"You have written to the Chevalier de Chastellux, my dear Marquis, that the interview I have asked for with our General embarrasses him, because it is at the time of the arrival of the second division and because then would be the time for action. But is it possible that you have forgotten that I have never ceased to ask for it as a preliminary to all else, and that it is indispensably necessary that he and the admiral and I should agree as to all our methods and all our details, in order that, if either of the three cases occur which will place us in a situation to act offensively, the execution should be prompt and rapid? In any of these three cases, my dear Marquis, you will still find in your old *radoteur de père* some traces of vigor and activity. Be assured of my most affectionate friendship, and that when I called your attention as gently as possible to the things which displeased me in your last despatch, I decided immediately that the fire of your heart and mind had somewhat warped the wisdom of your judgment. Preserve this latter quality in the council, and keep all of the former for the moment of execution. This is still *le vieux père* Rochambeau talking to his dear son Lafayette, whom he loves, and whom he will continue to love and esteem until his latest breath.

"Le Comte de Rochambeau."

Thus the friendship between Rochambeau and La Fayette, which for a moment had been shaken, was re-established upon a basis so substantial that their sympathies for each other and their sentiments of mutual regard continued uninterrupted throughout the war. The example of La Fayette's unaffected self-sacrifice in the American cause did much, no doubt, to allay the jealousies and win the merited consideration of his countrymen, who, upon their side, were unquestionably devoted to the interests they had come to serve.

There is, indeed, a tone of genuineness, of frank earnestness of purpose, distinctly traceable throughout the writings of the French commander, as they are contained in the Manuscript Letter Books of the Comte de Rochambeau, now the property of the United States Government, which illustrates in a remarkable manner the zealous attachment of these French auxiliary troops to the common cause and to the welfare of America. The loyalty with which they served this country, and the eagerness with which they seized the opportunity of fighting for it when the events of the time had opened to them the road to Yorktown, display a sentiment of devotion as worthy of just appreciation as that of patriotism itself. The reading of those letter books calls forth the admiration of the student of American history.

In the mean time, on the 16th of August, the frigate Alliance arrived in Boston from L'Orient, bringing the information that the second division of the Comte de Rochambeau's command was unable to come out of the harbor of Brest, where it was blockaded by a British fleet of some thirty vessels. It could, therefore, no longer be expected to arrive or be relied upon to furnish the reinforcements needed to enable the Continental army to begin offensive operations. General Washington conceived that this made a material change in the prospects of the campaign. Taken in connection with the impov-

erishment of the magazines, it determined him to dismiss all the militia in the service except those who were indispensable for immediate purposes.[1] He feared that it would put it out of his power to operate against New York now, though he still hoped that if sufficient relief could be obtained from Europe and if vigorous measures were taken to establish magazines, an important operation might be undertaken, though probably in a different quarter.[2]

The Marquis de La Fayette occupied himself in organizing and equipping, as far as the resources at his command would admit, the battalion of light infantry with which he now led the advanced guard of the army, and in which he took unusual pride. He said that the mutual attachment which had grown up between him and his men had become a by-word in America. He sent to France for presents with which to gratify them,—for various ornaments for the soldiers, swords for the officers and subalterns, and flags for the battalions. One of their flags bore a cannon with the device *Ultima ratio*, leaving out the word *regum* which made up the legend as it was employed in Europe; and a second flag bore a crown of laurel joined with a civic crown, with the device *No other*.[3] The corps was well drilled and well disciplined, and, although it was poorly clad, like the rest of the army, it presented a good appearance, and was distinguishable by the black and white plumes which La Fayette had had made for his men.

At a council of general officers, called by the Commander-in-Chief, and held on the 6th of September, General Washington presented a statement of the condition and prospects of the army, requesting each member of the

[1] Letter to the President of Congress, 28th August, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 178.

[2] Letter to James Bowdoin, same date: Ibid., vii. 176.

[3] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 261.

council to send him in writing his views as to the plan of operations to be adopted in the campaign. The result was the expression of a unanimous opinion that no attempt should be made upon New York until the second division had arrived from France, or until, by some other means, the naval superiority had been restored to the American arms.

General Washington determined, therefore, upon two measures in preparation for future offensive operations by the Continental army in conjunction with its allies: one was, to appeal to the Comte de Guichen for aid from his squadron in the West Indies; and the other, to appoint the long-wished-for interview between himself and the Comte de Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay. Until a short time before, the authority to act on the part of the Commander-in-Chief had been restricted to the limits of the United States; but, in order to enable him to co-operate more effectually with the French troops, Congress had enlarged his power in this regard and had granted him the right to communicate officially with the French and Spanish commanders in the West Indies for purposes relating to the American cause. He took advantage of this authority to write, on the 12th of September, to the Comte de Guichen a letter which he sent to the Chevalier de La Luzerne in Philadelphia to be put into the French cipher and to be forwarded by him to its destination.[1] He repeated in this letter what Admiral de Ternay had already announced to M. de Guichen, that the French fleet was blockaded in the port of Rhode Island, and that the French troops were under the necessity of remaining there to secure the fleet against a combined attack by sea and land; and he added that, in consequence of the expected aid from France, great exertions had been made in America and an additional expense incurred which was

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 195.

immense for the country in its exhausted condition; that great expectations had been excited among the people, and if events should not permit them to derive correspondent advantages, the disappointment would no doubt be attended with effects very injurious to their affairs. He said to him further that he had appointed an interview with M. de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay, in which they were likely to combine several plans, dependent for their execution upon different contingencies, one of which would be the arrival of a detachment from the fleet of M. de Guichen.

The aid of France was, indeed, the supporting arm to America at this period of the War of Independence. General Washington declared it in his letter to M. de La Luzerne with which he accompanied his despatch to the Comte de Guichen:[1] "I need use no arguments to convince your Excellency of the extremity to which our affairs are tending, and the necessity of support. You are an eye-witness to all our perplexities and all our wants. You know the dangerous consequences of leaving the enemy in quiet possession of their southern conquests, either in regard to negotiation this winter, or a continuance of the war. You know our inability to expel them unassisted, or perhaps even to stop their career."

He wrote to the Comte de Rochambeau, on the 8th of September, proposing that their interview should take place on the 20th of that month, at Hartford, where he hoped they should be able to devise some plan of future operation which events would enable them to execute; though all their plans must turn upon possibilities, which, he said, was the more unfortunate as the affairs of the country absolutely required activity, from whatever point of view they were considered. He announced that he should be accompanied at the interview by the Marquis

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 200.

de La Fayette and the commandant of artillery and engineers.

General Washington set out from his head-quarters, in Bergen county, New Jersey, on the 18th of September, and, crossing the Hudson River that same evening at King's Ferry, he proceeded to Hartford, where the meeting between himself and the French commanders took place with much ceremony upon the 20th. The Comte de Rochambeau and M. de Ternay were accompanied by several French officers of the expedition. General Washington had with him General Knox and the Marquis de La Fayette. Besides those who were officially present, M. de Rochambeau had brought in his suite some of his aides-de-camp, MM. de Fersen, de Damas, and Mathieu Dumas; for the desire to see Washington was so great in the French camp that the officers who could do so eagerly availed themselves of this opportunity. It was an exceedingly impressive moment when those representatives of the two armies met; the first occasion upon which General Washington had come into direct personal contact with the allied French troops.

The result of the deliberations which took place at the interview was afterward presented in a formal document, signed by both parties, in which the suggestions of the French commanders were set forth, consecutively numbered, in a column at the left side of the page, and the replies respectively given to them by General Washington were set opposite, similarly numbered, in a column upon the right.[1] It was sent in triplicate to France; the official copy intended for the Comte de Vergennes having been intrusted to the son of the French general, the Vicomte de Rochambeau, colonel of the regiment "de Bourbonnais," who sailed with it in a vessel detached for

[1] MS. Letter Books of the Comte de Rochambeau, Library of Congress, at Washington. This document has been published by M. Doniol in his Participation de la France, iv. 404.

the purpose by Admiral de Ternay. Although the whole situation was discussed in its different bearings, the index of the general opinion is evidently to be found in the conclusion set forth in Article 7, that nothing further could be done in the war without assistance, and that that assistance must be looked for from France.

"Ideas submitted to his Excellency General Washington by M. le Comte de Rochambeau and M. le Chevalier de Ternay.	*Answers of General Washington.*
* * * *	* * * *
"7th. The result of all these considerations is, the indispensable necessity of reinforcing the fleet and the army which are here, with ships, with men, and with money.	7th. The situation of America makes it absolutely necessary that the allies should give it their vigorous support, and that His Most Christian Majesty should add to our many other obligations and to the many other proofs of his generous interest, that of assisting the United States of America by sending them more ships, more men, and more money.
"Signed, C^TE^ De Rochambeau. Le Ch^R^ De Ternay.	Signed G. Washington."

This conclusion was the chief practical result of the interview at Hartford, aside from the advantages which accrued to the army and to the whole country from the personal meeting and the direct concord of opinion between the commanders of both the allied forces, and from the harmony produced by these friendly relations, which was maintained through all their subsequent intercourse.

The country was stimulated by the urgent appeals of Washington to make one more powerful effort to strengthen the army, to increase its effective force to thirty thousand men; and in connection with the feeling

which was now thoroughly aroused toward the accomplishment of that purpose, an appeal to the King of France became the source of all hope, the main object of reliance. To carry it into effect, a direct mission to Versailles was decided upon by Congress, and General Washington's aide-de-camp, Colonel John Laurens, was sent out to execute it.[1]

This visit to Hartford had for the Marquis de La Fayette a most dramatic termination, and was the means of bringing him, by an extraordinary chain of circumstances, upon the scene, almost at the very moment of its occurrence, of one of the strangest incidents of the war,—the treason of Benedict Arnold. It enabled him to be present when that detestable plot was announced to the Commander-in-Chief; to witness his horror and to share his mortification; and, finally, to assist in measuring out justly merited punishment, in the trial and execution of the British adjutant-general, Major John André.

Whilst General Washington was upon his way to Hartford, on the 18th of September, he had been met by Arnold, who had recently been appointed, at his own solicitation, to the command at West Point, and who came down the river to King's Ferry for the purpose of seeing him; and after the conference with the French commanders at Hartford was terminated, the Commander-in-Chief was returning to his head-quarters with the intention of stopping at West Point, in order to examine the fortifications there and to visit General and Mrs. Arnold. He reached West Point at noon on the 25th of September, the very day upon which Arnold escaped to the enemy; indeed, it was whilst General Washington was already within the garrison, inspecting with the Marquis de La Fayette the north and middle redoubts, that news of André's capture was brought to Arnold at

[1] For this mission of Colonel Laurens, see Doniol, La Participation de la France, vol. iv. chaps. vii. and xi.

his head-quarters, at Robinson's house, and he, knowing that the General was coming and might arrive at any moment, secretly fled aboard the British sloop of war Vulture, which bore him to New York.[1]

La Fayette, who had parted from the Chevalier de La Luzerne the day before, wrote to that gentleman, immediately, a letter in which he gave him an interesting account of what had taken place and of what he saw, which fortunately has been preserved:[2]

"West Point, 25th September, 1780.

"When I left you yesterday morning, M. le Chevalier, to come here to take breakfast with General Arnold, we were very far from thinking of the event which I am now about to announce to you. You will shudder at the danger we have run. You will be astonished at the miraculous chain of accidents and circumstances by which we have been saved. But you will be still more greatly surprised when you learn by what instrument this conspiracy was being carried on. West Point was sold, and it was sold by Arnold! That same man who had covered himself with glory by rendering valuable services to his country, had lately formed a horrid compact with the enemy. And, but for the chance which brought us here at a certain time, but for the chance which, by a combination of accidents, caused the adjutant-general of the English army to fall into the hands of some countrymen, beyond the line of our own posts, West Point and the North River would probably be in the possession of our enemies.

"When we left Fishkill we were preceded by one of my aides-de-camp and General Knox's aide, who found General and Mrs. Arnold at table and who sat down to breakfast with them.[3]

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[1] General Washington to General Heath, 26th September, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 216.

[2] This letter is printed, in part, in La Fayette's Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits, i. 367,—where it is dated the 26th of September,—and it is fully given, with the date of the 25th of September, in the "Revue de la Révolution, t. 5, Année 1885," in an article by M. Ernouf, entitled "Le Complot d'Arnold (1780), raconté par La Fayette."

[3] At this point the text of the "Revue de la Révolution" has evidently been confused by some error so as to read, "one of our aides-de-camp and General Knox's aide, who found General *Washington* and M. Arnold at table." This is certainly not what La Fayette intended to say; for he and

During that time two letters were brought to General Arnold giving him information of the capture of the spy. He ordered a horse to be saddled, went to his wife's room and told her that he was lost, and directed one of his aides-de-camp to say to General Washington that he had gone to West Point and should return in an hour.

"Upon our arrival here, we crossed the river and went to look at the works. Judge of our astonishment when, upon our return, we were informed that the captured spy was Major André, the Adjutant-General of the English army, and that among the papers found upon him was a copy of a very important council of war, a statement of the strength of the garrison and of the works, and certain observations upon the methods of attack and defence, all in General Arnold's handwriting. The English Adjutant-General wrote also to the General, admitting his rank and his name.[1] A search was made for Arnold, but he had escaped in a boat on board the sloop of war Vulture, and, as nobody suspected his flight, no sentry could have thought of arresting him. Colonel Hamilton, the chief aide-de-camp of General Washington, who had gone in quest of Arnold, received soon afterward a flag of truce with a letter from Arnold for the General, in which he made no effort to justify his treason, and a letter from the English Commandant, Robertson,[2] who, in a most insolent manner, demanded

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General Washington were together at West Point when Arnold left there, and the Commander-in-Chief did not arrive at Robinson's house until after the traitor's flight. M. Ernouf calls attention to this and other variations in the text.

[1] The text of the "Revue de la Révolution" is here erroneously made to say that the Adjutant-General "wrote *to Arnold*, admitting his rank," &c. Benedict Arnold knew André but too well, and there was no necessity for the latter's writing to him to explain his rank or his identity. The word he sent to Arnold was that "Anderson had been taken," which was notice to the traitor to save himself from the vengeance which he knew he had merited. The general referred to in La Fayette's narrative, to whom André wrote, was, of course, General Washington. See the letter of André to General Washington, from Salem, 24th September, 1780, in Proceedings of a Board of General Officers, Held by order of His Excellency Gen. Washington, Commander in Chief of the Army of the United States of America, Respecting Major John André, Adjutant General of the British Army, September 29, 1780. Printed at Philadelphia, 1780. And see also the Works of Alexander Hamilton, i. 176.

[2] The texts of the "Revue de la Révolution" and of La Fayette's Correspondence give this name as *Robertson;* though it is evident that the letter referred to is that of Colonel Bev. Robinson to General Washington, dated aboard the Vulture, on the 25th of September. Lieutenant-General Robertson did write to General Washington in André's behalf, but his letter, which

the surrender of the Adjutant-General, upon the ground that he had been acting under the permission of General Arnold.

"The first care of General Washington was, to return to West Point the troops whom Arnold had dispersed under various pretexts. We remained here to insure the safety of a fort which the English would value less if they knew it better. The Continental troops are being brought here, and, as the advice of Arnold may induce Clinton to make a sudden movement, orders have been given to the army to hold itself in readiness to march at a moment's notice.[1]

"I cannot describe to you, M. le Chevalier, to what degree I am astounded by this piece of news. In the course of a revolution such as ours it is natural that a few traitors should be found, and every conflict which resembles a civil war of the first order (although ours is, properly speaking, but a war between nations) must necessarily bring to light some great virtues and some great crimes. Our struggles have brought forward some heroes (General Washington, for instance) who would otherwise have been merely honorable private citizens. They have also developed some great scoundrels who otherwise would have remained merely obscure rogues. But that an Arnold, a man who, although not so highly esteemed as has been supposed in Europe, had nevertheless given proof of talent, of patriotism, and, especially, of the most brilliant courage, should at once destroy his very existence and should sell his country to the tyrants whom he had fought against with glory, is an event, M. le Chevalier, which confounds and distresses me, and, if I must confess it, humiliates me, to a degree that I cannot express. I would give anything in the world if Arnold had not shared our labors with us, and if this man, whom it still pains me to call a scoundrel, had not shed his blood for the American cause. My knowledge of his personal courage led me to expect that he would decide to blow his brains out (this was my first hope); at all events, it is probable that he will do so when he reaches New York, whither the English sloop proceeded immediately upon receiving Arnold on board. That vessel had come up the river in connection with this despicable conspiracy, and the house of

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was from New York, on the 29th of September, contained no demand for André's surrender.

[1] This is the end of the text, as it appears in vol. i. of the "Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits." The rest of the letter is given in the "Revue de la Révolution."

the Chevalier Smith, which is in our possession, was the place of rendezvous.

"The plan was to come up suddenly before West Point and to present all the appearance of an attack. Arnold intended to say that he had been surprised by a superior force. And but for the chance of our arrival at West Point, by which we received the papers which Arnold could readily have intercepted, but for a slight cannonade of no consequence which attracted the attention of people along the road Major André had naturally taken and obliged him to proceed in disguise, and, finally, but for the accidental presence and the honesty of certain countrymen, it would not have been possible to escape the disaster which threatened us, and Arnold would perhaps have betrayed us again afterward.

"I am not writing to M. le Comte de Rochambeau or to M. le Chevalier de Ternay; I beg you to communicate to them this incredible story.

"Unaccustomed as they are to the convulsions of a revolution, what will the officers of the French army say when they see a general abandon, and basely sell, his country after having defended it so well! You can bear witness, M. le Chevalier, that this is the first atrocity that has been heard of in our army. But, if, on the one hand, they hear of the infamy of Arnold, they are bound to admire the disinterestedness of a few countrymen who happened to meet Mr. André with a passport from General Arnold, and who, upon the mere suspicion of his being a friend of England, made him a prisoner, refusing, at the same time, his horse, his watch, and four hundred guineas which he offered them if they would allow him to continue upon his way.

"We are now examining Mr. Smith whilst we are waiting for the Adjutant-General. I hope both of them will be hung, but especially the latter, who is a man of influence in the English army and whose very distinguished social rank will act as a warning to spies of less degree.

"I shall conclude my long letter, Monsieur le Chevalier, by referring to a subject which must touch every humane heart. The unhappy Mrs. Arnold did not know a word of this conspiracy; her husband told her before going away that he was flying never to come back, and he left her lying unconscious. When she came to herself, she fell into frightful convulsions, and completely lost her reason. We did everything we could to quiet her; but she looked upon us as the murderers of her husband, and it was impossible to restore her to her senses. The horror with which her

husband's conduct has inspired her, and a thousand other feelings, make her the most unhappy of women.

"P.S. She has recovered her reason this morning, and as, you know, I am upon very good terms with her, she sent for me to go up to her chamber. General Washington and every one else here sympathize warmly with this estimable woman, whose face and whose youthfulness make her so interesting. She is going to Philadelphia; and I implore you, when you return, to use your influence in her favor. It would be exceedingly painful to General Washington if she were not treated with the greatest kindness. You know the sentiments of the people and of the Assembly of Pennsylvania. Your influence and your opinion, emphatically expressed, may prevent her from being visited with a vengeance which she does not deserve. General Washington will protect her also. As for myself, you know that I have always been fond of her, and at this moment she interests me intensely. We are certain that she knew nothing of the plot.

"LAFAYETTE."

Major André had landed from the sloop of war Vulture on the night of the 21st of September, with the expectation of returning on board the same night, although it was considered rather doubtful whether that plan could be carried out. He was promised, however, that if he were obliged to remain over he should be safely concealed until the following night. He met Arnold, and had an interview with him, upon coming ashore. He was not able to reach the Vulture that night; and the next day he was informed that he could not be set aboard because the Vulture had been obliged to change her moorings, they having been too close to an American battery on the shore, which had immediately opened fire and forced her to drop lower down the river. André found himself under the necessity, therefore, of proceeding to New York by land: he attempted this on the night of the 22d of September, having taken off his uniform and assumed the disguise in which he was afterward captured. He had proceeded as far as Tarrytown, on his way to New York, when he fell in with Paulding, Williams, and Van Wert,

on Saturday morning, the 23d of September, about nine o'clock, and was made prisoner by them.

He was tried before a court-martial presided over by General Greene and composed of six major-generals and eight brigadier-generals, among whom was Major-General the Marquis de La Fayette, at Tappan, on the 29th of September; and, having been condemned as a spy, he was hung, according to the law and usage of war, on the 2d of October, 1780, at noon.

The accomplishments and personal qualities of André won the attachment of all who came in contact with him during his services in America; and his youth, his promise of distinction in the British army, and the unhappy circumstances of his capture and death, made his case one of peculiar sadness. But he had been found in disguise within the American lines in time of war, with important papers upon his person, conveying the secrets of the American army to the enemy, and it was admitted by himself that he had come as the instrument, upon the British side, of an infamous conspiracy against the well-being, the existence, indeed, of this country. There was no alternative; and a hundred years of deliberation have not reversed, in the opinion of the public, the judgment of that court. At the same time, his fate aroused an intense feeling of pity toward him personally, which was shared both by the Commander-in-Chief and by the army; and the Marquis de La Fayette, who had signed the judgment of the court which condemned him to death, wrote of him to Mme. de La Fayette, "He was an interesting man, the confidant and friend of General Clinton; he conducted himself in a manner so frank, so noble, and so delicate, that I cannot help feeling for him with infinite sorrow."[1]

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 376.

CHAPTER XXI.

END OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1780—VISIT OF THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX TO WASHINGTON AND LA FAYETTE—MISSION OF JOHN LAURENS TO FRANCE.

THE campaign of the year 1780, which had opened with such bright hopes of success when the Marquis de La Fayette had arrived, announcing succor from France, and when the Comte de Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay cast anchor at Newport with the promise of a second division from France which should assure the naval superiority of the allies and so greatly increase the efficiency of General Washington's army that the most important offensive operations might be undertaken, was wearing itself away in disappointments and delays. The French auxiliary force lay helplessly blockaded at Newport. The fleet was unable to move, on account of the British war-ships which cruised outside the harbor watching Admiral de Ternay; and the land forces were useless in respect to active operations, because the admiral would not agree to their leaving him, lest he should need them to help defend his vessels in case the enemy attacked him.

General Washington with his army lay within reach of the Hudson River, in a position from which he could watch the enemy throughout the summer. He was prepared upon the first favorable opportunity to carry out the movement against New York which was always uppermost in his mind and which seemed to offer the best promise of bringing the war to a close.

But news came from France, by the frigate Alliance, on

the 16th of August, that the second division of the French squadron was blockaded by an English naval force of thirty-two sail in the harbor of Brest; and it was learned that General Washington's letter of the 12th of September to the Comte de Guichen had not reached that officer before his departure for France. The naval commander who succeeded him in the West Indies had not the key to the cipher into which M. de La Luzerne had put the General's writing; consequently no assistance was sent in answer to his request.

Admiral de Ternay, whose temperament unfitted him for a rugged conflict like the American Revolution, expressed his feelings in the despondent letters which he sent from Newport to Versailles. "The fate of North America," he wrote, "is yet very uncertain, and the revolution is not so far advanced as has been believed in Europe."[1] He did not live long enough to judge by subsequent events of the value of his opinion; for he died at Newport in the following December. La Fayette said afterward that he believed the admiral had died of grief.[2]

La Fayette himself showed no sign of discouragement, though he chafed under the inactivity which was so contrary to his nature and which he regarded as damaging to the cause. He sought in every direction the means of an enterprise which, if it should not involve the moving of the army, might at least employ him and his light brigade. He conceived the idea of making a night attack, in August, upon the Hessian camp at the upper end of York Island; and upon his return to his command after the visit to Hartford he planned an expedition against Staten Island, which he would have carried out if the

[1] MS. Letter to the Comte de Vergennes, 10th September, 1780: quoted by Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 200.

[2] "L'escadre française a toujours été bloquée à Rhode-Island, et j'imagine que le chevalier de Ternay en est mort de chagrin." To Mme. de La Fayette, 2d February, 1781: Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits, i. 406.

resources of the army in equipment and supplies had enabled him to do so. Unwilling to stand idle, he appealed urgently to General Washington, even at the end of October, in his anxiety that something should be done, lest America should suffer in credit and reputation from an inactivity which might be misunderstood abroad:[1]

"LIGHT CAMP, October 30th, 1780.

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—In our conversations upon military operations you have often told me that, since the beginning of the campaign, your eyes were turned towards a project upon which I generally agree in opinion with you, and beg leave to offer some observations.

"Far from lessening my desire of finishing the campaign by some brilliant stroke, the project of Staten Island, though it miscarried, has strengthened my opinions, as I have clearly seen, by the details of this operation, that we should, in all human probability, have succeeded, and that our men were fully equal to any enterprise of that kind.

"My reasons for wishing to undertake something are these:—1st. Any enterprise will please the people of this country, and shew them that when we have men we do not lie still; and even a defeat (provided it was not fatal) would have its good consequences. 2ndly. The French court have often complained to me of the inactivity of the American army, who, before the alliance, had distinguished themselves by their spirit of enterprise. They have often told me, your friends leave us now to fight their battles, and do no more risk themselves: it is, moreover, of the greatest political importance to let them know, that, on our side, we were ready to co-operate. Be sure, my dear general, that many people's interest will be to let it be believed that we *were not ready*, and if anything may engage the ministry to give us the asked for support, it will be our proving to the nation that, on our side, *we had been ready*. So far was the Chevalier de la Luzerne convinced of this (and on this point the minister's interest is the same as ours) that he was made happy by my mentioning to him the Staten Island affair. I well know the court of Versailles, and were I to go to it, I should think it very impolitic to go there unless we had done something. 3rdly. It is more than probable that mediators will interfere this winter by a negotiation. Then Eng-

[1] La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 358.

land will say, how can we give up people whom we consider as half conquered; their best city has been taken by an army not much superior to the people that were to defend it; their southern army was routed almost as soon as looked at by the British troops; New York is so much ours, that they dare not approach it, and General Washington's army does not exceed five thousand men. What shall France answer? Principally now that from the letters I have received I find the Charleston affair has brought our arms into contempt. But what difference, if France might say, the American army has taken, sword in hand, your best works; they have offered to you the battle upon your own island, and, perhaps they may add (for news increases in travelling), they are now in possession of New York.

"Upon these considerations, my dear general, what I want is this, to find an expedition which may wear a brilliant aspect, and afford probable advantages, also an immense, though very remote one, which, if unsuccessful, may not turn fatal to us, for the loss of two or three hundred men, half of them being enlisted for two months, I do not consider as a ruinous adventure.

"The basis of the plan will be, that Fort Washington, being in our possession, may, with the Fort Lee batteries, protect our crossing North River, and be a security for our retreat, principally if some works are added on the point of embarkation. The taking of Fort Washington we may demonstrate to be very probable, and upon that point you are of my opinion.

"The enemy have on the upper part of the Island from fifteen hundred to two thousand men, who would immediately occupy all the other upper posts. Their army on Long Island would repair to New York, and there would also retire the troops posted at Harlem.

"As soon as Fort Washington should be ours, the army would cross over to the island, and those of West Point arrive in the same time (which calculation may be easily done) so that we should effectually possess all the upper posts, or cut them off from their main army. Some militia would come to our assistance, and as these posts are not well furnished with provisions we should take them, at least, by famine.

"The enemy's army consists of nine thousand men: they must certainly leave one thousand men in their several posts; fifteen hundred of them, at least, will be either killed at Fort Washington or blocked up at Laurel Hill, and they will then have between six and seven thousand men to attack ten. The two thousand militia (in supposing that they durst take them out) I do

not mention, because we may have four thousand militia for them; under such circumstances it is probable that Sir Henry Clinton will venture a battle. If he does, and by chance beat us, we retire under Fort Washington; but, if we beat him, his works will be at such a distance, that he will be ruined in the retreat. If, on the contrary, he knows that the French army is coming, and if we spread the report of a second division, or of Count de Guichen being upon the coasts, he will keep in his works, and we will, some way or other, carry the upper posts. When we are upon the spot we may reconnoitre New York, and see if something is to be done. If Clinton was making a forage into the Jerseys, I should be clear for pushing to the city.

"If we undertake, the circumstances of the weather make it necessary that we undertake immediately. I would move the army, as soon as possible, to our position near the new bridge. This movement may invite Clinton in the Jerseys, and bring us nearer to the point of execution.

"Though my private glory and yours, my dear general, both of which are very dear to my heart, are greatly interested, not so much for the opinions of America, as for those of Europe, in our doing something this campaign, I hope you know me too well to think I should insist upon steps of this nature unless I knew that they were politically necessary, and had a sufficient military probability.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"The six hundred men of Lauzun's legion might be got in twelve days. If our movements had no other effect but to make a diversion in favour of the south, it would, on that footing, meet with the approbation of the world, and perhaps impeach the operations of General Leslie."

General Washington felt as keenly as La Fayette the disadvantages which were likely to weigh down the credit of America if the causes of inaction were misunderstood, or misrepresented, abroad. His heart was bent upon the one purpose which he had held in view throughout the conduct of the war,—to strike the enemy whenever and wherever circumstances justified him in doing so, and always to advance, if it were but a single step, toward the ultimate establishment of liberty in America. But, while the contest which he was carrying on required at

times daring and promptness of action, such as he had already shown at Trenton and at Princeton, and determination of character to bear him through moments of impending danger, as in the crisis at Monmouth, it pre-eminently demanded prudent judgment, since much or all might be lost by a step taken without due caution. Greatly as he desired the attack to be made upon New York, he was forced to admit that it would not be safe; and in his reply to La Fayette's letter he gave that as his deliberate judgment:[1]

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 30 October, 1780.

"It is impossible, my dear Marquis, to desire more ardently than I do to terminate the campaign by some happy stroke; but we must consult our means rather than our wishes, and not endeavour to better our affairs by attempting things, which for want of success may make them worse. We are to lament, that there has been a misapprehension of our circumstances in Europe; but, to endeavour to recover our reputation, we should take care that we do not injure it more. Ever since it became evident, that the allied arms could not coöperate this campaign, I have had an eye to the point you mention, determined, if a favorable opening should offer, to embrace it; but, so far as my information goes, the enterprise would not be warranted. It would in my opinion be imprudent to throw an army of ten thousand men upon an Island against nine thousand, exclusive of seamen and militia. This, from the accounts we have, appears to be the enemy's force. All we can do at present, therefore, is to endeavour to gain a more certain knowledge of their situation and act accordingly. This I have been some time employed in doing, but hitherto with little success. I shall thank you for any aids you can afford. Arnold's flight seems to have frightened all my intelligencers out of their senses.

"I am sincerely and affectionately yours."

It appears, however, that the idea of attempting a surprise upon York Island during that campaign was not even then entirely abandoned; for plans were made for a night attack in force upon the British posts, nearly a

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 280.

month later, toward the end of November, in which La Fayette was to have taken part with his light infantry.[1] The unexpected movement of some war-vessels up the river defeated the project; and with the close of November General Washington ended the campaign and went with the army into winter quarters. The French auxiliary force established its winter quarters at Newport, with the exception of the Legion commanded by the Duc de Lauzun, which, for the purpose of obtaining forage with greater facility, was posted by the French commander at Lebanon, in Connecticut, not far from the residence of Governor Trumbull.

We owe to the presence of this French detachment in America during the year 1780, and to its enforced idleness through the winter of that year, an interesting contemporary account of the general appearance of the United States during the Revolution, and of the manners and customs of the people, together with a description of the army as it appeared in its encampment, its discipline, its arms and equipment, and, what for the purposes of this narrative possesses the greatest value, the record of a visit to General Washington at his head-quarters and of several days spent with the Marquis de La Fayette. This account is given by one of the French officers, the Chevalier de Chastellux, a scholar of literary distinction in France and a member of the French Academy, who was then serving with the rank of major-general in the land forces commanded in America by the Comte de Rochambeau. A man of wide information and of inquiring mind, he naturally felt a strong desire to see and to know more of the continent and of its people than his opportunities had permitted him to do during the tedious months of garrison duty at Newport, when he had scarcely

[1] See the Instructions of General Washington to Colonel Gouvion, Colonel Moylan, General Wayne, Colonel Pickering, and Lieutenant-Colonel Humphreys: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 302 *et seq.*

been able to leave his command for a day; and he determined to take advantage of the insured quiet of winter to make an expedition inland. He was a personal friend of La Fayette, whom he very much wished to visit; and he had, above all, an intense desire, in common with all the French officers of the detachment, to meet General Washington and to enjoy his society.[1]

"In the beginning of October," says M. de Chastellux, "the season being then advanced, without anything being undertaken by Admiral Rodney, we had reason to expect that we should remain quiet for the remainder of the year, and our sole occupation was in preparing winter quarters for the troops. They took possession of them the 1st of November: and I might now without risk have absented myself from the army; but not wishing to shew too much anxiety, and desirous of seeing discipline and the arrangements relative to the cantonments well established, I deferred until the 11th setting out on a long tour upon the continent.

"I left Rhode Island that day with Mr. Lynch and M. de Montesquieu, who had each of them a servant. I had three, one of whom had a led horse, and another drove a small cart, which I was advised to take, to convey my portmanteaus, and to avoid hurting my horses in the journey. It was then a hard frost, the earth was covered with snow, and the north easterly wind blew very sharp. . . . At two o'clock I arrived at Warren, a small town in the state of Massachusetts, eighteen miles distant from Newport. I alighted at a good inn, the master of which, called Buhr, is remarkable for his enormous size, as well as that of his wife, his son, and all his family. My intention was only to have baited my horses, but the cold continuing to increase, and the cart not arriving before three o'clock, I gave up all thoughts of going to sleep at Providence, and I determined to stay at Warren, where I was in very good quarters."

Continuing his journey, with varying incident, but with evident interest and enjoyment, through Connecticut by way of Voluntown, Windham, Hartford, and Litchfield,

[1] Travels in North America, in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782. By the Marquis de Chastellux. Two volumes. London, 1787.

M. de Chastellux passed Fishkill and came to West Point, where he was entertained by the commandant, General Heath; and, proceeding farther in the direction of the army, by Verplanck's and Haverstraw, he arrived in New Jersey just before the army broke up its camp to go into winter quarters. He passed the night at Haverstraw on the 22d of November.

"The 23rd," his narrative continues, "I set out at eight o'clock, with the intention of arriving in good time at the Marquis de la Fayette's camp; for I had learnt that the army was not to move that day, and I was desirous of being presented by him to General Washington. The shortest road was by Paramus; but my guide insisted on my turning to the northward, assuring me that the other road was not safe, that it was infested by tories, and that he always avoided it, when he had letters to carry. I took the road to the right, therefore, and followed for some time the rivulet of Romopog; I then turned to the left, and soon got into the township of Pompton, and into the Totohaw road; but being informed that it led me straight to the main body of the army, without passing by the van commanded by M. de la Fayette, I inquired for some cross road to his quarter, and one was pointed out to me, by which, passing near a sort of lake which forms a very agreeable point of view, and then crossing some very beautiful woods, I arrived at a stream which falls into Second River, exactly at the spot where M. de la Fayette was encamped. His posts lined the rivulet; they were well disposed, and in good order. At length I arrived at the camp; but the Marquis was not there; apprized of my coming by the Vicomte de Noailles, he had gone to wait for me at seven miles distance, at head quarters, where he thought I should direct my course. He had sent, however, Major Gimat, and one of his Aides-de-Camp, to meet me, but they had taken the two roads to Paramus; so that by his precautions, and those of my guide, I was, as they say in English, completely disappointed, for it was two o'clock, and I had already travelled thirty miles without stopping. I was in the utmost impatience to embrace M. de la Fayette, and to see General Washington, but I could not make my horses partake of it. It was proposed to me to proceed directly to head quarters, because, said they, I might *perhaps* arrive in time for dinner. But seeing the impossibility of that, and being in a country where I was known, I desired some oats for my horses. Whilst they were making this

slight repast, I went to see the camp of the *Marquis*, it is thus they call M. de la Fayette; the English language being fond of abridgments, and titles uncommon in America. I found this camp placed in an excellent position; it occupied two heights separated by a small bottom, but with an easy communication between them. The river Totohaw, or *Second River*, protects its right, and it is here that it makes a considerable elbow, and turning towards the south, falls at length into the bay of Newark. The principal part of the front, and all the left flank, to a great distance, are covered by the rivulet which comes from Paramus, and falls into the same river. This position is only twenty miles from New York island; and was accordingly occupied by the van guard, consisting of light infantry, that is to say, by the picked corps of the American army; the regiments, in fact, which compose it have no grenadiers, but only a company of light infantry, answering to our *Chasseurs*, and of whom battalions are formed at the beginning of the campaign. This troop made a good appearance, were better clothed than the rest of the army; the uniforms both of the officers and soldiers were smart and military, and each soldier wore a helmet made of hard leather, with a crest of horse-hair. The officers are armed with espontoons, or rather with half-pikes, and the subalterns with fusils; but both are provided with short and light sabres, brought from France, and made a present of to them by M. de la Fayette. The tents, agreeably to the American custom, formed only two ranks; they were in regular lines, as well as those of the officers; and as the season was advanced, they had good chimneys, but placed differently from ours; for they are all built on the outside, and conceal the entrance of the tents, which produce the double effect of keeping off the wind, and of preserving heat night and day. I saw no piles of arms, and was informed that the Americans made no use of them. When the weather is good, each company places its fusils on a wooden horse; but when it rains, they must be removed into the tents, which is undoubtedly a great inconvenience: this will be remedied when the means of doing it are more abundant, but I fear much, that this will not happen the next year."

Although M. de Chastellux had been invited to dinner by Major Galvan, a French gentleman serving in the American army whom he met at La Fayette's head-quarters, he preferred to decline that courtesy and to push on

to the head-quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, where he now knew M. de La Fayette to be. He set out accordingly with Colonel MacHenry, one of La Fayette's aides-de-camp, who offered his services as a guide. Proceeding along the river, after riding two miles he came in sight of the left of the army:

"At length, after riding two miles along the right flank of the army, and after passing thick woods on the right, I found myself in a small plain, where I saw a handsome farm; a small camp which seemed to cover it, a large tent extended in the court, and several waggons round it, convinced me that this was his *Excellency's* quarter; for it is thus Mr. Washington is called in the army, and throughout America. M. de la Fayette was in conversation with a tall man, five feet nine inches high,[1] of a noble and mild countenance. It was the General himself.

"I was soon off horseback, and near him. The compliments were short; the sentiments with which I was animated, and the good wishes he testified for me were not equivocal. He conducted me to his house, where I found the company still at table, although the dinner had been long over. He presented me to the Generals Knox, Waine, Howe, &c. and to his *family*, then composed of Colonels Hamilton and Tilgman, his Secretaries and his Aides-de-camp, and Major Gibbs, commander of his guards; for in England and America, the Aides-de-Camp, Adjutants and other officers attached to the General, form what is called his *family*. A fresh dinner was prepared for me, and mine; and the present was prolonged to keep me company. A few glasses of claret and Madeira accelerated the acquaintances I had to make, and I soon felt myself at my ease near the greatest and the best of men. The goodness and benevolence which characterize him, are evident from everything about him; but the confidence he gives birth to, never occasions improper familiarity; for the sentiment he inspires has the same origin in every individual, a profound esteem for his virtues, and a high opinion of his talents. About nine o'clock the general officers withdrew to their quarters, which were all at a considerable distance; but as the General wished me to stay in his own house, I remained some time with him, after which he conducted me to the chamber prepared for my Aides-de-Camp and me. This chamber occupied the fourth part of his lodgings;

[1] About five feet ten inches and a half, English.

he apologized to me for the little room he had in his disposal, but always with a noble politeness, which was neither complimentary nor troublesome."

Despite the apparent tranquillity at General Washington's head-quarters, and the perfect self-possession with which the Commander-in-Chief received and entertained his guests, which might have produced the impression of comfort, almost of ease, he was at that very moment watching the movements of the British troops with unremitting attention. The slightest opportunity for an offensive operation would have been taken advantage of instantly by the American army; and indeed it was but two days before that orders had been given for preparations in view of the proposed night attack upon York Island which has been referred to above, and the execution of which had been prevented by unlooked-for obstacles. M. de Chastellux had an intimation that something of this kind was contemplated when he was visiting General Heath at West Point, though even that officer was not fully informed as to the purpose of the instructions communicated to him from General Washington by Lieutenant-Colonel Humphreys.[1] The Chevalier de Chastellux says that, "From various intelligence, by indirect ways, General Heath was persuaded, that in case the enemy collected his force to interrupt the forage, M. de la Fayette would attack Staten Island, and he was not deceived." And he adds, what is an interesting commentary upon the discipline of the Continental army, "Secrecy is strictly observed in the American army; very few persons are in the confidence of the Commander, and in general there is less said of the operations of war, of what we call news, than in the French army."

"At nine the next morning," he continues, in narrating his visit to General Washington, "they informed me that his Ex-

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 306.

cellency was come down into the parlour. This room served at once as audience chamber, and dining-room. I immediately went to wait on him, and found breakfast prepared. Lord Stirling had come to breakfast with us. . . .

"Whilst we were at breakfast, horses were brought, and General Washington gave orders for the army to get under arms at the head of the camp. The weather was very bad, and it had already begun raining; we waited half an hour; but the General seeing that it was more likely to increase than to diminish, determined to get on horseback. Two horses were brought him, which were a present from the State of Virginia; he mounted one himself, and gave me the other. Mr. Lynch and M. de Montesquieu had each of them, also, a very handsome blood horse, such as we could not find at Newport for any money. We repaired to the artillery camp, where General Knox received us. The artillery was numerous, and the gunners, in very fine order, were formed in parade, in the foreign manner, that is, each gunner at his battery, and ready to fire. The General was so good as to apologize to me for the cannon not firing to salute me; he said, that having put all the troops on the other side of the river in motion, and apprized them that he might himself march along the right bank, he was afraid of giving the alarm, and of deceiving the detachments that were out. We gained, at length, the right of the army, where we saw the Pennsylvania line; it was composed of two brigades, each forming three battalions, without reckoning the light infantry, which were detached with the Marquis de la Fayette. General Waine, who commanded it, was on horseback, as well as the Brigadiers and Colonels. They were all well mounted: the officers also had a very military air; they were well ranged, and saluted very gracefully. Each brigade had a band of music; the march they were then playing was the *Huron*. I knew that this line, though in want of many things, was the best clothed in the army; so that his Excellency asking me whether I would proceed, and see the whole army, or go by the shortest road to the camp of the *Marquis*, I accepted the latter proposal. The troops ought to thank me for it, for the rain was falling with redoubled force; they were dismissed, therefore, and we arrived heartily wet at the Marquis de la Fayette's quarters, where I warmed myself with great pleasure, partaking, from time to time, of a large bowl of grog, which is stationary on his table, and is presented to every officer who enters. The rain appearing to cease, or inclined to cease for a moment, we availed ourselves of the opportunity to follow his Excellency to the camp of the

Marquis: we found all, his troops in order of battle on the heights to the left, and himself at their head expressing, by his air and countenance, that he was happier in receiving me there, than at his estate in Auvergne.

"The confidence and attachment of the troops, are for him invaluable possessions, well acquired riches, of which nobody can deprive him; but what, in my opinion, is still more flattering for a young man of his age, is the influence, the consideration he has acquired amongst the political, as well as the military order. I do not fear contradiction when I say, that private letters from him have frequently produced more effect upon some states than the strongest exhortations of the Congress. On seeing him, one is at a loss which most to admire, that so young a man as he should have given such eminent proofs of talents, or that a man so tried, should give hopes of so long a career of glory. . . . The rain spared us no more at the camp of the Marquis, than at that of the main army; so that our review being finished, I saw with pleasure General Washington set off in a gallop to regain his quarters. We reached them as soon as the badness of the roads would permit us. At our return we found a good dinner ready, and about twenty guests, among whom were Generals Howe and Sinclair. The repast was in the English fashion, consisting of eight or ten large dishes of butcher's meat, and poultry, with vegetables of several sorts, followed by a second course of pastry, comprised under the two denominations of pies and puddings. After this the cloth was taken off, and apples and a great quantity of nuts were served, which General Washington usually continues eating for two hours, *toasting* and conversing all the time. These nuts are small and dry, and have so hard a shell (hickory nuts) that they can only be broken by the hammer; they are served half open, and the company are never done picking and eating them. The conversation was calm and agreeable; his Excellency was pleased to enter with me into the particulars of some of the principal operations of the war, but always with a modesty and conciseness, which proved that it was from pure complaisance he mentioned it.

"About half past seven we rose from table, and immediately the servants came to shorten it, and convert it into a round one; for at dinner it was placed diagonally to give more room. I was surprised at this manœuvre, and asked the reason of it; I was told they were going to lay the cloth for supper. In half an hour I retired to my chamber, fearing lest the General might have business, and that he remained in company only on my account;

but at the end of another half hour, I was informed that his Excellency expected me at supper. I returned to the dining room, protesting against this supper; but the General told me he was accustomed to take something in the evening; that if I would be seated, I should only eat some fruit, and assist in the conversation. I desired nothing better, for there were then no strangers, and nobody remained but the General's family. The supper was composed of three or four light dishes, some fruit, and above all, a great abundance of nuts, which were as well received in the evening as at dinner. The cloth being soon removed, a few bottles of good claret and Madeira were placed on the table. . . . I observed that there was more solemnity in the toasts at dinner: there were several ceremonious ones; the others were suggested by the General, and given out by his Aides-de-camp, who performed the honours of the table at dinner; for one of them is every day seated at the bottom of the table, near the General, to serve the company, and distribute the bottles. The toasts in the evening were given by Colonel Hamilton, without order or ceremony. After supper the guests are generally desired to give a *sentiment;* that is to say, a lady to whom they are attached by some sentiment, either of love or friendship, or perhaps from preference only. This supper, or conversation, commonly lasted from nine to eleven, always free, and always agreeable.

"The weather was so bad on the 25th, that it was impossible for me to stir, even to wait on the Generals, to whom M. de la Fayette was to conduct me. I easily consoled myself for this, finding it a great luxury to pass a whole day with General Washington, as if he were at his house in the country, and had nothing to do. . . .

"The intelligence received this day occasioned the proposed attack on Staten Island to be laid aside. The foraging party under General Starke had met with the most complete success; the enemy not having thought proper to disturb them, so that they had not stripped the posts in the quarter where it was intended to attack them: besides, that this expedition would only have been a *coup de main*, rendered very difficult by the badness of the roads from the excessive rains. It was determined therefore that the army should march the next day to winter quarters, and that I should continue my route to Philadelphia.

"The weather being fair, on the 26th, I got on horseback, after breakfasting with the General. He was so attentive as to give me the horse he rode on, the day of my arrival, which I had greatly commended: I found him as good as he is handsome; but

above all, perfectly well broke, and well trained, having a good mouth, easy in hand, and stopping short in a gallop without bearing the bit. I mention these minute particulars, because it is the General himself who breaks all his own horses; and he is a very excellent and bold horseman, leaping the highest fences, and going extremely quick, without standing upon his stirrups, bearing on the bridle, or letting his horse run wild; circumstances which our young men look upon as so essential a part of English horsemanship, that they would rather break a leg or an arm than renounce them."

The Marquis de Chastellux continued his journey and shortly afterward reached Philadelphia. The Continental army having now gone into winter quarters, the troops composing the light brigade were returned to their respective regiments and M. de La Fayette was temporarily released from active duty in the camp. He took advantage of this opportunity to obtain leave of absence, and went to Philadelphia, where he joined M. de Chastellux and a number of other young French officers, who were travelling through the United States that winter whilst their regiments were waiting for the coming spring at Newport. La Fayette not only took great pleasure in presenting these gentlemen to the numerous friends he had made in Philadelphia and the other towns through which they passed, but also went with them to the various battle-fields to assist them in their critical study of the war, and to point out the scenes of the actions in which he had taken part. One of these excursions led him to Brandywine, where, in company with M. de Chastellux, the Vicomte de Noailles, the Comte de Damas, the Chevalier du Plessis-Mauduit, M. de Montesquieu, and his own aides-de-camp, MM. de Gimat and de Neville, he spent a happy day on the 6th of December, the company returning to Philadelphia by way of Chester upon the following day. Shortly afterwards, on the 12th, they made an interesting visit to the scene of La Fayette's exploit at Barren Hill in the spring of 1778.

In the midst of this enjoyment, however, La Fayette was discontented, because of the inaction into which he had been forced, in spite of his efforts to the contrary. In order to escape the necessity of remaining idle during the entire winter, he had conceived the plan of going into the Southern department and uniting himself to General Greene, in the hope of discovering some opportunity of employing his zeal and of distinguishing himself in his profession. It was probably due to this ambitious longing on his part that he received at last the orders of General Washington to operate in the South, after circumstances had sufficiently developed to present an opening for the display of his energy and tact in combating the British forces in Virginia; and it brought him into the field as an independent commander at the very moment when the crisis of the war was approaching, through the succession of events which led up to the brilliant termination at Yorktown, in which La Fayette was to have the happiness of taking part.

But the time was not yet quite ripe when he was in Philadelphia with M. de Chastellux. General Washington replied to his solicitation,—

"It is my earnest wish, as I mentioned at Morristown, that you should be governed in this matter by European and southern advices. These you are more in the way of receiving than I am. If there is a prospect of a naval superiority in these seas, and an augmentation of the French land force at Rhode Island, I shall, with the freedom of a friend, give it as my opinion, that your going to the southern army, if you expect a command in this, will answer no valuable purpose. . . . On the other hand, if we are likely to remain in a state of inactivity in this quarter, your seeking service at the southward, where there is a more fruitful field for enterprise, is not only an evidence of your zeal, but will be supported by every rule of military reasoning." [1]

We find La Fayette, who seems to have been possessed

[1] From New Windsor, 8th December, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 316.

of an irrepressible desire for activity, planning shortly afterward an expedition to be composed of Continental and French troops in conjunction with the Spanish forces in the West Indies, who were known to be preparing for an attack upon Florida. It occurred to him that this might offer an opportunity of aiding General Greene, and, possibly, of restoring South Carolina and Georgia to the American arms. He even wrote to the Spanish commanders upon this subject, explaining to them his purpose, and requesting from them a co-operation which he could, in truth, have had but little reason to expect; for he knew that their disposition and their characteristic exactness in adhering to the orders of their government would prevent them in all probability from entering into an expedition so little in accordance with their own interests and with the purposes of the King of Spain.

The maturer judgment of the Commander-in-Chief again checked his too hasty enthusiasm by recalling him to the actual situation, in which the elements of a successful expedition such as he had imagined were not to be found. The American army was destitute; therefore it could not supply the troops and the equipment for such an undertaking. General Washington wrote in reply to one of La Fayette's letters at this time, "The Chevalier de la Luzerne's despatches came in time for the post, which is the only means left me for the conveyance of letters, there not being so much money in the hands of the quarter-master-general (I believe I might go further and say, in those of the whole army) as would bear the expenses of an express to Rhode Island. I could not get one the other day to ride so far as Pompton!"[1] The French troops at Rhode Island were equally unable to supply the forces for a remote operation. General Washington understood the disappointments and embarrass-

[1] From New Windsor, 14th December, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 322.

ments of those veterans, who, having come across the Atlantic Ocean with the generous purpose of helping a struggling people, were now so unhappily situated that they could not even help themselves. His consideration for them disinclined him to make any demands upon them that could be avoided, or to assert in the slightest degree the authority of Generalissimo which they had voluntarily acknowledged. He said to La Fayette,—

"I am now writing to the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay on the subject of your several letters. When their answer arrives, I will communicate the contents to you. You must be convinced, from what passed at the interview at Hartford, that my command of the French troops at Rhode Island stands upon a very limited scale, and that it would be impolitic and fruitless in me to propose any measure of coöperation to a third power without their concurrence; consequently an application from you antecedently to an official proposition from the minister of France, the gentlemen at the head of the French armament at Rhode Island, the Congress, or myself, could only be considered as coming from a private gentleman. It is therefore my advice to you to postpone your correspondence with the Spanish generals, and let your influence come in hereafter, as auxiliary to something more formal and official."[1]

La Fayette had not waited for this advice, but had already sent his communications to the Spanish commander,[2] which, as was to have been expected, produced no result.

In spite of the impulsiveness of his actions at this time, when his desires outran the resources available to carry them into effect, the Marquis de La Fayette must be awarded credit for his earnest endeavors to advance the American cause; and, besides, his ideas were tending in the right direction, for it was in the South, and not at

[1] From New Windsor, 14th December, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 322, 323.

[2] La Fayette to Washington, 5th December, 1780: Correspondence, American edition, i. 367, Original.

New York, as every one had believed until then, that the contest was to be decided within a year.

With the same remarkable pertinacity that he showed in his efforts to obtain some tangible result in America, M. de La Fayette was pleading our cause and soliciting assistance for us in France. His letters to the Comte de Vergennes, to whom he reported the progress of affairs, have the sincerity and reliance upon the sympathy of his correspondent with which a son might address his parent upon a subject which interests them both; and there is no doubt that they were of great service to the United States. We find him writing to M. de Vergennes (in cipher), from his camp at Harrington, in New Jersey, on the 4th of October, 1780,[1]—

"Without maritime superiority, Monsieur le Comte, there will be no certain operation in America. If the four thousand men and the seven vessels had arrived early in the spring, the port of New York would have been ours; and we should have operated with success against that place if, after the arrival of Graves, M. de Guichen had come to release us. General Washington had no doubt as to the advantage of attacking New York. If, during this autumn, within two months, we should receive a superior maritime force, we should be able to operate against Charleston and reconquer the Southern States. If, however, the English remain masters of the sea, we shall limit ourselves to awaiting attacks, several of which will be difficult to repel. Everybody will inform you, Monsieur le Comte, that Admiral Rodney has arrived here with ten vessels and that the English have now nineteen ships of the line in these waters, of which they fully recognize the importance. The second division gives us as much anxiety as its delay causes us impatience and creates doubt in the minds of the Americans. Upon my return to this continent I found prejudices greatly diminished, and they have been still more so for some time past; my plan was to propose to you, not only as a useful measure but as a necessary one, to open the campaign here early next spring with a corps of ten thousand men and an assured maritime superiority. The situation of

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 14, fol. 25, No. 4: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1627.

America calls for your most serious attention; and every year of delay increases the number of ships and of men as well as the quantity of money that you will have to send. If the succor had reached us early this season, and if we had had the naval superiority, an increase next year would have been unnecessary.

"The Congress has no money and little power. Our troops are in want of food, of pay, and of clothing. By the 1st of January this army will not amount to six thousand men. You will have heard of the defeat of Gates and of the progress of Lord Cornwallis in the South. The efforts of the States were, as you know, but momentary; they were aroused by the influence of private citizens, by a feeling of gratitude for the favors received from France, and by a determination to co-operate effectively with their allies. We had prepared ourselves to act during this campaign, and we should have furnished for an attack upon New York fourteen thousand regular troops, ten thousand militia, and still more if it had been necessary. The Continental troops that we still have are equal in every respect to those of the enemy, and they have a patience in their misery which is unknown in European armies. We are occupied at present in inducing the States to restore to the Congress those powers which they have allowed gradually to be lost,—in raising an army for the war, and in taking steps toward the support of that army. The Eastern States are well disposed; New York intends to adopt the same measures; the deliberations of the States appear to me to be more certain and more effective than those of the general Congress.

"The great obstacle, Monsieur le Comte, is the lack of money. I leave that matter to be discussed by M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne; I shall content myself with saying that a sum of money, in specie, intended exclusively for the American army, would remove three-quarters of our troubles, and that it is absolutely necessary for our clothing next year. Monsieur le Comte, if the Government does not take up this matter with special attention, we shall suffer from the same delays and the same misconduct upon the part of the American agents. We ought during the course of this winter to receive, independently of what may already have been shipped, fifteen thousand complete uniforms, with under-clothing and blankets; and, provided that fifteen thousand muskets arrive, we shall require a large additional quantity of powder.

"Before the war with France, the English had never thought of fortifying the seaports; they had scarcely given the matter any

attention until last year. By recalling how much they are able to accomplish in a single year, you will realize how different our resources will have to be for next year. In order to give you an idea, I will mention that the fort of Brooklyn has as yet only three bastions finished, that consequently it has been merely begun this summer, and that they are now at work upon barracks and magazines. The seven vessels under M. de Ternay employ nineteen of the enemy's ships at this moment; and, in view of this fact, it cannot be said that they are useless. The French detachment protected us from a very threatening offensive operation which General Clinton was forced to abandon; it has also given us reason for calling upon the different States and for raising troops. Its excellent conduct has given people here a high opinion of our national discipline.

"But this is not enough, Monsieur le Comte. In the present condition of affairs in America, and in view of its present attitude, it is essential to the interest, as well as to the honor, of France that our flag should rule over these seas, that the campaign should be decisive, and that it should begin with the coming spring.

"A few days ago, Monsieur le Comte, General Washington and I returned from Hartford, where he had an interview with the French generals. General Washington's opinion accorded exactly with the résumé of which the King's minister has sent you an extract. They decided by common consent what measures should be taken in the two following cases: if we should secure the naval superiority during the present autumn; or if our inferiority should still continue. In the first case, we should embark four thousand men in the Delaware, who, joined with four thousand Frenchmen, and with about two thousand men in the South, whither we should send the cavalry by land, would enable us, with the aid of the militia, to reconquer South Carolina and Georgia. After the 1st of January there would remain here the Continental garrison of West Point, supported by militia. In the second case, it was decided that nothing could be done, and that we should occupy ourselves with the coming campaign. . . .

"The French officers expressed a desire to spend the winter at Rhode Island; having been obliged to protect the fleet, they had, as yet, been unable to join us. Upon both these points General Washington followed their opinions, which he regarded as having been based upon their instructions. The utmost good feeling exists between the generals and the troops of the two nations, and the French, from the general to the common soldier, conduct

themselves in a perfect manner toward the American leaders and the people.

"It is possible that the English may be beaten as the result of some unwise movement upon their part; it is also possible that they may detach a part of their army so that we shall be able to approach New York from the other side of the river. All this is uncertain; but what is not so is, that they are able to take advantage of their situation in the South and of the impossibility of our sending there by land a sufficient body of troops. Besides, the lack of money checks us in every direction, and all our means of transportation are becoming more and more difficult. . . . We have at present under arms ten to eleven thousand Continentals. The Pennsylvania division is to march toward West Point. We are, therefore, with eight or nine thousand men within easy reach of the English army. The grand army is at the point marked upon the map as *Orangetown;* the flying camp, which forms its advanced guard, is three miles ahead of it, at Harrington."

He wrote again to M. de Vergennes (in cipher), on the 16th of December, from Philadelphia,[1] whilst he was upon the visit there with the Chevalier de Chastellux to which we have already referred; and still later, with redoubled earnestness, in a most interesting letter, in cipher, from "New Windsor, on the North River," on the 30th of January, 1781.[2] He said to M. de Vergennes, "Since the arrival of the squadron, your despatch of the 3d of June is the only one that I have received. M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne has had only one letter, of the same month; and none have reached the generals of the army and the fleet." This letter was written to the French Minister of State, to be taken to Versailles by Colonel John Laurens, who was upon the point of setting out on the mission by which it was hoped he should be able to procure further assistance for the United States from the King of France.

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 14, fol. 417, No. 123: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1631.

[2] Etats-Unis, t. 15, fol. 139, No. 36: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1632; Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 394.

La Fayette presented Colonel Laurens with the highest commendation to the attention of the Cabinet:

"Permit me to recommend this officer as a man who, from his integrity, his frankness, and his patriotism, cannot fail to be very acceptable to the Government;" and he continued, "According to the instructions he has received from the Congress, he will submit to you the condition of our affairs, and I believe that they call now more than ever for the most serious attention. As to the opinion which I shall venture to express, Monsieur le Comte, it accords with all that I have said heretofore, and the slight alteration which it has undergone has merely changed it to meet the time, the prejudices, and the circumstances.

"With the naval inferiority, it is not possible to make war in America. It is this that prevents us from attacking a point which we should be able to carry with two or three thousand men. It is this that has reduced us to the defensive, as dangerous as it is humiliating. The English comprehend this fact, and all their movements prove how greatly they desire to retain the empire of the sea. But, on the other hand, the ports, the country, and all its resources appear to call upon us to send naval forces here. If we had had this superiority last spring, we should have been able to do a great deal even with the army brought out by M. le Comte de Rochambeau, and it would not have been thought necessary to await the division of which he announced the coming. If M. de Guichen had gone by way of Rhode Island in returning to France, Arbuthnot would have been lost, and the efforts of Rodney would never have prevented our conquests. Since the day when the French troops arrived, their inferiority has not ceased for one instant, and the English and Tories have dared to say that France only wanted to stir up the fire without extinguishing it. This calumny becomes all the more dangerous when the English detachments are devastating the South, where, under the cover of a few frigates, a corps of fifteen hundred men are moving into Virginia without our being able to reach them. Upon the whole continent, except the islands of Newport, it is physically impossible for us, without ships, to move offensive forces; and even upon these islands the difficulties of transportation and of obtaining provisions, and a number of other obstacles that are to be feared, make every undertaking too perilous for us to mark out a plan of campaign.

"The result of this is, then, Monsieur le Comte, that, since the United States are the object for which we are making war, and

since the progress of the enemy upon this continent is the true method of prolonging it, perhaps of allowing it to become fatal to us, it is politically and militarily necessary, both by detachments from France and by a grand movement of the West India fleet, to give us here, in time for the coming campaign, an assured maritime superiority. Another necessity, Monsieur le Comte, is to secure for us enough money to bring the forces of America into active operation. Fifteen thousand regular troops, ten thousand militia, and more if we want them, in this vicinity; an army in the South, the number of which I shall not decide, but which will be raised by the five Southern States; all the necessary expenditures in these regions of such considerable forces;—these are, Monsieur le Comte, the resources which you can employ against the common enemy, all of which are actually upon the true theatre of the war, and which could not be transported thither from Europe for immense sums, but which without financial aid will be totally useless; and this aid, important as it was before, has now become necessary.

"The last campaign was made without a shilling, and all that credit, that persuasion, and that force can do is well-nigh exhausted. This miracle, of which I do not believe there has ever been another example, will be impossible to repeat; and while we have exerted ourselves to enlist an army for the war, we must now look to you for the means with which to put it in motion.

"From my own personal situation, Monsieur le Comte, and from what it has enabled me to see and to comprehend, I feel that I am in duty bound to present to you a true understanding of the American soldiers and of the part which they will play in the operations of the approaching campaign. The Continental troops have as much courage and real discipline as those who are opposed to them. More hardened and more patient than European troops, they are not in these two respects to be compared with them. They have many officers of merit, who, to say nothing of those who have served during the preceding wars, are endowed by nature with talents, and have been trained by daily experience through several campaigns in which, the armies being small and the country difficult, all the battalions of the line have had to serve as advanced guards and light troops. The recruits whom we expect are such only in name, for they have frequently fought in the same regiments that they are now going to rejoin, and they have seen more muskets fired than three-quarters of the European soldiers.

"As to the militia, they are nothing but armed country boys, who have seen some fighting, who are not wanting in ardor and discipline, but who would be most usefully employed in the operations of a siege. This, Monsieur le Comte, is a faithful description, which I have thought it my duty to give you, and which it is not to my interest to overdraw, because we should have greater glory if we succeeded with inferior material. M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who has seen our soldiers, and who will give you an exact and disinterested account, will certainly say to you, as I do, that you ought to rely upon our regular troops."

On the 1st of February he wrote to M. de Vergennes, from New Windsor, a letter addressed to him as a friend and not as a Cabinet minister, in the interest of Colonel Laurens, whom he recommended to his private kindness and his polite attention, as a gentleman in every respect worthy of it.[1] He wrote letters of the same tenor to all the ministers of the King, including "one for M. Necker, whom it will not be without value to convince of the necessity of giving money to the Americans."

In a financial sense, and so far as concerned the resources with which to carry on the war, this period during the winter of 1780 and the spring of 1781, marked by the sending of Colonel Laurens to France,—itself an act of desperation,—this "present infinitely critical posture of our affairs," as Washington said,[2] was the moment of greatest depression and most imminent danger of the war. It would have been impossible to continue the contest much longer if help, substantial and far reaching, had not been forthcoming; and there was nowhere else in the world to look to for this but France. General Washington declared to Dr. Franklin, then in Paris, that nothing appeared more evident to him than that the period of our opposition would very shortly arrive, if our allies

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 15, fol. 188, No. 44: Stevens's Facsimiles, vol. xvii. No. 1633.

[2] To Dr. Franklin, 15th January, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 378.

could not afford us that aid, particularly in money and in a naval superiority, which was then solicited. The amount required was based upon estimates for an army of thirty-two thousand men; and, whilst a full statement of the condition both of the army and of the country was given to Colonel Laurens to present at Versailles, it was also shown to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, who constantly reported the minutest details of the war to his Government. He wrote to M. Vergennes, in November, that according to this exhibit the expenditures would be, at the lowest estimate, fifty-six millions of livres tournois, as against a revenue of thirty millions, leaving a deficit of over twenty millions.[1]

The sending of Colonel Laurens to France did not, in all probability, relieve the situation, beyond giving a certain emphasis to the pressing needs of the time, because it was felt that he went as the representative of a faction in Congress known to be hostile to Dr. Franklin, who was in favor at the French Court; and the Comte de Vergennes regarded this mission as an unnecessary one, which could accomplish nothing further than might readily have been done by correspondence through the regular official channels. Besides this, the burden of the war was beginning to weigh heavily upon France herself; her finances were strained by outlays which had been much greater, and by demands which had come much more frequently, than had been expected at the outset: so that it was an unfavorable moment for Laurens to arrive in France with these seemingly exorbitant requests under any circumstances, and he only increased the existing embarrassment by a zeal which far outran his discretion and which curtailed his influence at Court.

After hearing of the appointment of Colonel Laurens, who sailed for France in the frigate Alliance on the 13th

[1] M. de La Luzerne's Report, 3d November, 1780; Archives of France, Etats-Unis, t. 14, No. 49: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 386.

of February, 1781, the Comte de Vergennes wrote to the French minister in Philadelphia, that

"Congress rely too much upon France for subsidies to maintain their army. They must absolutely refrain from such exorbitant demands. The great expenses of the war render it impossible for France to meet these demands if they are continued. You must speak in a peremptory manner upon this subject; and, to give more weight, you must observe that the last campaign has cost us more than a hundred and fifty millions of extraordinary expenses, and what we are now about to furnish will surpass that amount.

"You may add that our desire to aid Congress to the full extent of our power has engaged us to grant to Dr. Franklin (besides the one million which he required to meet the demands of the last year) four millions more, to enable him to take up the drafts which Congress have drawn on him for the present year. . . . If you are questioned as to our opinion of Dr. Franklin, you may say without hesitation that we esteem him as much for the patriotism as for the wisdom of his conduct; and it has been owing in great part to this cause, and to the confidence we put in the veracity of Dr. Franklin, that we have determined to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments in which he has been placed by Congress." [1]

In the general effort to supply the exigencies of the troops in the field, to which the whole country had become aroused during the year 1780, there were examples of self-devotion and exalted patriotism worthy in the highest sense of the purpose for which the nation was struggling. In every direction men gave what they could spare, and even more than they could spare; women worked and begged to provide clothing and blankets for the soldiers; for, as La Fayette had reminded the Comte de Vergennes, the prospect of the American soldier was "hunger, cold, nakedness, toil; the certainty of receiving neither pay, nor clothing, nor food; which must be uninviting enough to these citizens the most of whom live in comfort in their own homes." In the name of the Marquise de La Fay-

[1] MS. Letter of 15th February, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 380.

ette, to whom he referred as one who, "heartily wishing for a personal acquaintance with the ladies of America, would feel particularly happy to be admitted among them on the present occasion," he wrote to Mrs. Reed enclosing a subscription toward the patriotic fund which the ladies of Philadelphia were raising;[1] and he told Mme. de La Fayette afterward, "The ladies have formed and are still forming subscriptions for the purpose of giving some help to the soldiers. At the time when this idea was first proposed, I made myself your ambassador to the ladies of Philadelphia, and you are upon the list for a hundred guineas."[2]

The Continental army was especially in need of clothing, which was one of the subjects to which the Marquis de La Fayette had given particular attention during his visit to France, and immediately before he set sail for America, in the early part of the year 1780. To his intense disappointment, the uniforms he had arranged for were not aboard the Alliance, which had been expected to bring them to America; and at the end of the year they still had not come. Whilst he was in Philadelphia, in December, he was called upon by the Admiralty Board for information upon this subject, and replied as follows:[3]

"To the Hon^ble President of the Admiralty Board.

"Philadelphia, December 16th, 1780.

"Sir,—I have received the letter you honored me with on the 13th Instant and in complyance with the desire of the Honorable Board of Admiralty, which I understand has been directed to make these questions, I think it my duty to give to Congress (as their officer) such intelligence I am Master off as relate to the extraordinary and distressing affair of our cloathing.

"Upon an application to the Court of France, three millions

[1] Life and Correspondence of William B. Reed.

[2] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 374.

[3] Archives of the United States, Department of State, Papers of the Old Congress.

of their livres were sent to the American Minister; the whole would have been employed in purchases had not Mr. Franklin become timid by the frequent Drafts of Congress, whose Bills ought not to be protested, and 700,000 livres I think were destined to the getting of the most necessary articles.

"The sum was at first divided between cloathing and Military Stores, but upon my undertaking to obtain fifteen thousand stands of arms, and one hundred thousand of powder, it was determined that the Money be employed in getting Ten thousand compleat suits ready made.

"Some days after this I informed Doctor Franklin that Prince de Montbarrey had promised to let us have the quantity of powder & arms mentioned, the last of the best model I knew off.

"On the point of leaving France, I got the Minister of War to write a letter, wherein he promises that the stores shall be delivered into American hands—and a letter from Doctor Franklin gives also to me assurances of having Ten Thousand suits ready made & of 122 Bales, the last of which Mr. Ross can give a better account off.

"I was also promised in writing by the Minister of the Navy that all American public property should be shipped on Board the Fleet then making ready, which promise I could not at the time mention to the Minister,[1] as I had given my honor not to speak a word to any body relating to the expedition. But by private letters from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I see that since my departure the arrangement had been altered—the reason of it I can not ascertain—what I know is, that by a letter of the 3d of June, after the departure of the Fleet, the same Minister says that all our cloathing & stores are going with, and under convoy of, the Alliance.

"Upon an application from Doctor Franklin before my departure, I had obtained that the frigate appointed for my passage should disembark Provisions and take in cloathing—the American Minister sent his orders to Nantz—but tho' I was some days retarded in port, no cloathing came to Rochfort, which was attributed to various accidents.

"I am told that to the disappointment of Doctor Franklin, the Alliance was taken from Captain Jones by Captain Landais—that notwithstanding application from the French Commander at Port Louis, Landais refused to take Military Stores offered in the name of the French Court—that he denied a passage to Count de Vau-

[1] The American minister, Dr. Franklin (?).

ban, who had, it is said, important dispatches which have not yet come to hand.

"These intelligences I got from my Secretary,[1] and two other French Gentlemen then present. But Mr. Arthur Lee, who was on Board, must know of this matter.

"Doctor Franklin has from time to time mentioned to me his orders to the American Agents, which I thought to be very proper —how far these Gentlemen have forwarded or neglected the business I am not able to ascertain to Congress.

"With the greatest respect &
"Esteem I have the Honor to Be
"Sir,
"Yr. Most ob^{t} Serv^{t}
"LAFAYETTE."

The administration of the Naval Department in France had undoubtedly been very defective, and most of the failures from which the French Government suffered in the years 1779 and 1780, in connection with the extravagant preparations for a descent upon England, on the one hand, as well as with the auxiliary force to be sent to America, on the other, were due to this cause. Neglect, inefficiency, and delay had left the Comte de Rochambeau begging for ships to transport his soldiers at a time when he ought to have been across the Atlantic; and the same causes obliged him to divide his force, under penalty of not being able to proceed at all; though by that time full information had been carried to the enemy, who were prepared to act, with exceedingly well planned movements, in opposition.

The blockade of the port of Brest was, taken all in all, probably the most efficient single measure adopted by the British ministry during the war. It counteracted the effect of the French alliance by keeping part of the auxiliary forces at home, a method at once less expensive and much less dangerous than to fight them in America; and, in conjunction with the equally well conceived blockade

[1] M. Poirey was secretary at this time to the Marquis de La Fayette.

of M. de Ternay at Newport, it held the entire French expedition in check throughout the campaign.

The removal of M. de Sartine and the succession of the Marquis de Castries, whom La Fayette described to General Washington as "a man of great worth, one of our best lieutenant-generals, and a most firm man," led to a marked improvement in naval affairs, and were received with much gratification in America, where every particle of strength added to the resistance to Great Britain had now come to be important. General Washington replied to La Fayette's announcement of this event, "Under one general head I shall express my concern for your disappointment of letters, our disappointment of clothes, and disappointment in the mode of raising men; but I shall congratulate you on the late change of the administration of France, as it seems to be consonant to your wishes, and to encourage hope."[1]

Throughout the month of December, 1780, M. de La Fayette remained in Philadelphia, where he continued his correspondence with General Washington upon the subject of proceeding to the South to join General Greene. The Commander-in-Chief wrote to him on the 26th, from his head-quarters, at New Windsor,[2] that he was still of the opinion which he had expressed to him before, that he would better wait a little longer, at all events, because news was hourly expected from France and it appeared impossible that some tidings of the second division should not soon reach America.

La Fayette abandoned his idea of going to the South; and he wrote to General Washington from Philadelphia,[3]—

"My former letters will have explained to you my sentiments relating to a journey southward. I must heartily thank you, my

[1] 14th December, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 323.

[2] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 339.

[3] Letter of 16th December, 1780: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 488.

dear General, for the kind and friendly letters you have been pleased to send me. I am so happy in your friendship that every mark of your affection for me gives me a degree of pleasure which far surpasses all expressions. As I have written you before, my dear General, there is an intelligence of some ships and troops having been put in readiness at Brest; there is a possibility of a Spanish officer waiting on you for the sake of a co-operation. We are also to expect news from my friend, the new Minister of the French Navy, and before they arrive you would not like my departure.

"Two other reasons have weight with me; the first that if the enemy make this detachment, without which nothing material will happen in the Southward, and if the intelligence is true about the fast recruiting of six months men, there is (not a probability) but a possibility of something to be done in this quarter. The second is, that for reasons I will explain to you when we meet, a visit from you to the French army is to be much wished, and in this case you will be glad that I may accompany you.

"Under these circumstances, to which is added a natural reluctance to part from you and this army, and some idea that upon the whole my staying will be more agreeable to you, I think, my dear General, that unless new intelligence comes I will soon return."

La Fayette was ordered by Congress to confer with Colonel Laurens immediately after his appointment and whilst he was preparing to set out for France, in order to give him such information as it might be useful for him to have upon his mission and to inform him as to the French people and the customs at the French Court. This he very willingly did, and he sent word to General Washington that when the latter should be giving his instructions to Laurens the presence of one acquainted with France might be agreeable to him, therefore he should return to the head-quarters shortly afterward.

He set out accordingly from Philadelphia, in company with Colonel Laurens, and reached General Washington's head-quarters on the 11th of January, 1781.[1] La

[1] Washington to General Heath, 12th January: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 365.

Fayette's disposition toward John Laurens at this period, in which he showed that young officer the greatest kindness, is in direct contrast with the spirit in which Laurens had referred to La Fayette in his letters written at the time of the complications which grew out of the Comte d'Estaing's efforts before Newport. La Fayette cordially recommended him to his influential personal friends in France; and to Mme. de La Fayette he wrote, "I wish you to receive him in the most friendly manner. If I were in France, he should live at my house and I should take him to see all my friends, I should do everything to assist him in making acquaintances and to render his visit agreeable in Versailles; during my absence I beg you to take my place. Take him to see Madame d'Ayen, the Maréchal de Mouchy, and M. le Maréchal de Noailles, and treat him as an old friend of the family."[1]

It is very likely, however, that, kindly as he felt toward Laurens, La Fayette would rather have seen Alexander Hamilton selected as the envoy from Congress to the Court of France. He had an exceedingly warm affection for Hamilton; and, indeed, whilst the selection was still pending in Congress, the choice being between Hamilton and Laurens, he exerted himself in Hamilton's behalf, engaging members of Congress to vote for him and making visits to several others for that purpose during the days immediately preceding the final vote.[2]

In like manner La Fayette had strongly supported the interests of Hamilton in the hope that he might receive the appointment of Adjutant-General, upon the resignation of that post by Colonel Scammell, in the middle of November, 1780. Hamilton would have been complimented by his selection, although he modestly declined to permit the subject to be mentioned to General Wash-

[1] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 405.

[2] La Fayette to Hamilton, 28th November, 1780: Hamilton's Works.

ington, who did not suspect that he had an eye to it.[1] The Commander-in-Chief consulted La Fayette upon the subject, who said in his reply, after mentioning the names of General Hand and Colonel Smith, "Unless, however, you were to cast your eye on a man who, I think, would suit better than any other in the world. Hamilton is, I confess, the officer whom I should like to see in that station. With equal advantages, his services deserve from you the preference to any other. His knowledge of your opinions and intentions on military arrangements, his love of discipline, the superiority he would have over all the others, principally when both armies shall operate together, and his uncommon abilities, are calculated to render him perfectly agreeable to you."[2]

Unfortunately, this letter did not reach General Washington until he had sent the name of General Hand to Congress.[3]

La Fayette remained at the head-quarters of General Washington, at New Windsor, during the month of January, waiting anxiously for news from France which should enable the American army to prepare a definite plan of action for the coming campaign, and expecting to accompany the Commander-in-Chief upon the visit which he shortly intended to make to the French commanders at Newport.

He wrote from New Windsor to Mme. de La Fayette, on the 2d of February, describing his situation:[4]

"Ever since I have been here my health has continued to be perfect. The air of this country is excellent for me, and the exercise is infinitely useful; that of the last campaign did not, however, involve me in any very serious danger, and upon that head we have only a very moderate reason to boast. . . .

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[1] Washington to General Greene, 13th December, 1780: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 321.

[2] Correspondence, American edition, i. 365.

[3] La Fayette to Hamilton, 9th December, 1780: Hamilton's Works.

[4] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 404.

"Many Frenchmen have been to the Head-Quarters; they have all been charmed with General Washington, and I see with much pleasure that he is going to be greatly beloved by the auxiliary troops. . . . The Vicomte [de Noailles] and Damas have made a long journey into the continent, and we have also had the Comte de Deux-Ponts, of whom I am very fond. M. de Charlus is at present in Philadelphia. I expect to start for Rhode Island about the 15th, and I shall accompany General Washington upon the visit which he is going to make to the French army. When you remember what was thought in France of *these poor rebels* at the time when I came over here, as it was said, to be hanged with them, and when you think of my affectionate attachment to General Washington, you will understand how sweet it will be to me to see him received there as the Generalissimo of the combined armies of the two nations.

"I am still loaded with kindness by the Americans, and there is not a mark of confidence and affection that I do not receive daily from the army or the people. My service here is the most agreeable that it is possible to have; whenever we are in active campaign, I command a separate flying camp made up of the choicest troops; and I feel toward the American officers and soldiers that friendship which comes from a long series of dangers and sufferings, of good and evil fortunes, which I have shared with them. We began together; our affairs have frequently been at the lowest ebb; and it is sweet to me to crown the work with them by giving to the European troops a good idea of the soldiers who have been developed with us. Added to all these motives of interest in the cause and in the army, are the sentiments which attach me to General Washington. Among his aides-de-camp there is still a man of whom I am very fond, and of whom I have frequently spoken to you; that is, Colonel Hamilton. . . .

"Kiss our children a thousand and a thousand times for me. Although their father is a vagabond, he is none the less tender in his love for them, none the less constantly mindful of them, or less happy to have news of them. My heart looks forward, as upon a delightful perspective, to the moment when my dear children shall be held up to me again by you and when you and I shall caress them and embrace them together."

La Fayette was then unconsciously approaching the time when the field of activity was to open to him as fully as he could wish. Whilst he was expecting almost

daily to be called upon to make the promised journey to Newport, which General Washington made but which he did not, events were shaping themselves which suddenly demanded his services. The opportunity had come for him to turn again toward the south; to take up a separate command against an almost triumphant enemy; to measure himself, young as he was, with the best of the British leaders, Earl Cornwallis; and, in performing his last military duty in America, to sustain with credit that Virginia campaign which led up to the glorious termination at Yorktown.

CHAPTER XXII.

OPERATIONS OF THE BRITISH IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

THE policy of the British Government in carrying on the war in America was now completely changed from what it had been at the outset. It was at first supposed by the ministry that the rebellion could easily be crushed if the principal cities were taken possession of and held as bases from which to overawe and control the more productive and populous States. These having been reduced to subjection, the remainder of the country could be dealt with in detail. If the British could have regained the States of New York and Pennsylvania, and, by holding the Hudson River, have cut off communication between New England and the Middle States, the main sources of supply would have been destroyed and the American cause would have been seriously threatened. Indeed, the one object which General Washington constantly kept in view was to defend the Hudson River, in order to secure the communication between New England and the Middle States.

After three years of fighting, the British had acquired no substantial foothold upon the continent. They had taken New York City, which they had employed as a base of operations, and which had been extremely useful to them as a protection to their fleets; but their influence did not extend inland from there, and they vainly endeavored to win back the people of New York State and of New Jersey to the standards of the King. They had taken Philadelphia also, as one of the steps toward the accomplishment of their military purposes. But they

gained no permanent advantage from that; for, after holding it less than a year, they gave it up. The defeat of Burgoyne at Saratoga had once more preserved to the Americans the control of the Hudson River, which had been in imminent peril; and the alliance of the United States with France made it necessary for the British again to concentrate their forces at New York, in the interests of their own safety. So that by the summer of 1778 they had come back practically to their starting-point, after having accomplished very little.

They now decided to make a vigorous effort in another direction: to leave in New York City a force which should protect that post and menace the Northern States sufficiently to engage the attention of the Continental army, and at the same time to open active hostilities in the South, for the purpose of establishing British rule definitively in the two Carolinas and in Georgia. The theory of the ministry was that if the productive and more thinly settled country of the Southern States were secured, the North could be dealt with afterward; or, if it should become necessary at last to make peace by yielding some of the territory in dispute, a line might be drawn in such a manner that, at the worst, Great Britain would not have to give up all her colonies in America.

This new policy was put into operation by the detachment, from New York, in November, 1778, of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell with a force of three thousand men, under the escort of a squadron commanded by Commodore Hyde Parker, which arrived at the mouth of the Savannah River on the 23d of December, and a few days later crossed the bar, the fleet and the transports coming to anchor inside of the light-house of Tybee.

On the 29th, after an ineffectual resistance on the part of General Robert Howe, the American commander, who attempted with an inferior force to defend the position, Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell took Savannah, with the

loss of but a handful of men; and, by the co-operation of General Prevost, who marched triumphantly from East Florida in January, 1779, Sunbury was reduced, Augusta captured, and, from the British stand-point, the province of Georgia restored to the Crown. Colonel Campbell promised the inhabitants protection, upon condition that "they would support the royal government with their arms."

According to the plan laid down by Lord George Germain, a line of communication was to be established across South Carolina and North Carolina, and the planters along the sea-coast were to be obliged either to abandon their slaves or to be abandoned by them. Five thousand additional troops were subsequently to be detached to capture Charleston; and the Secretary anticipated that at the landing of a small corps at Cape Fear "large numbers of the inhabitants would doubtless flock to the standard of the King, whose government would be restored in North Carolina." Afterward, he believed, "if effective movements were made in Virginia and Maryland, it would not be too much to expect that all America south of the Susquehanna River would return to its allegiance."[1]

The British Government relied much upon the loyalty to the King which it was expected would be found among the people of these Southern States, or which it was hoped might be developed by conquest. The ministry overestimated the results, however, in that respect, for the Tory influence was not so effective in those districts as it had been found in some of the States at the North; and, besides, its administration of the conquered territory was fatally defective in this, that, while it promised the return of peace and the benign protection of the King of Great Britain to the inhabitants who should go back to their allegiance, it expected these Americans not merely to

[1] Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, 8th March, 1778.

enjoy the privileges thus offered, but also to fight for them under the British standards during the continuance of the war in the Southern States; not suspecting, apparently, that if the intentions of Great Britain meant war in South Carolina and North Carolina and Georgia, and if the men of those States were to fight at all events, they would choose to fight in the ranks of their own countrymen rather than shoulder to shoulder with a foreign invader. This miscalculation surrounded the British with enemies, who seemed to spring up in every direction; it was the great defect of policy during the subsequent commands of Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis, and it was one of the important causes which rendered British success impossible.

General Prevost, who assumed command of the British forces in Georgia, carried on the contest for supremacy throughout the summer of 1779, holding without difficulty the ground he had won there, and making with considerable effect an incursion into South Carolina, almost to Charleston, against Major-General Benjamin Lincoln, who had been appointed by Congress to take command in succession to General Howe.

In the month of October, 1779, followed the attack by the Americans upon Savannah, where Prevost refused to surrender to the combined forces of General Lincoln and of the French under the Comte d'Estaing, who had come again into the waters of the United States after his cruise in the West Indies. Their assault upon the town was very determined, and was followed by an exceedingly obstinate struggle, during which the French admiral was twice wounded; but it was ineffectual. General Prevost held his position, and the French fleet soon after sailed for France, whilst General Lincoln retired with his shattered army to Charleston.

Up to this point the British arms had been uniformly victorious in the South. The British commander-in-chief

now determined to take an active part personally in the operations which were being carried on there, at what seemed an auspicious moment for the suppression of at least a great part of the rebellious people. Accordingly, Sir Henry Clinton set out from New York on the 26th of December, 1779. He left General Knyphausen to hold command in his absence, and took with him eight thousand five hundred men, who were embarked upon transports under convoy of the fleet of Admiral Arbuthnot.

After an exceedingly rough and dangerous voyage, during which the expedition suffered considerable loss, he arrived at the Savannah River toward the end of January, 1780, and joined his forces to those under General Prevost. This gave him an army of ten thousand men. Notwithstanding the superiority of his strength over that of his antagonists, General Clinton sent to New York for Lord Rawdon with about three thousand men more. He was still further reinforced by the arrival of Lord Cornwallis from New York in the month of April; and on the 12th of May he captured Charleston, where the brave General Lincoln and his equally brave army were forced to lay down their arms and to surrender themselves prisoners of war.

So great was the effect produced upon the inhabitants of the Southern States by the loss of this important city, a blow which spread grief and consternation through the entire district, that Sir Henry Clinton was convinced of the complete subjugation of South Carolina and of the favorable disposition of the mass of the population toward the re-establishment of the British rule. He issued a proclamation in which he declared that it had now become proper that all persons should take an active part in settling and securing his Majesty's government and delivering the country from the anarchy which had recently prevailed. He released from their paroles those of the militia who were prisoners, except those captured

in Fort Moultrie and Charleston, and restored them to all the rights and duties of British subjects. He also declared that such of them as should neglect to return to their allegiance and to His Majesty's Government would be considered and treated as enemies and rebels.

After this, with exceeding hopefulness as to the outcome of the measures then being adopted, Sir Henry Clinton detailed about four thousand of his troops to the command of Lord Cornwallis in South Carolina, and on the 5th of June, 1780, embarked with the remainder of his forces for New York.

He looked forward confidently to the happy moment when he should be able to report to the British Government the result of the Southern campaign, in regard to which Lord George Germain had written to him, "The reduction of the Southern provinces must give the death-wound to the rebellion, notwithstanding any assistance the French may be able to give it; and if that were the case, a general peace would soon follow, and this country be delivered from the most burdensome and extensive war it ever was engaged in. As so much, therefore, depends upon our successes in America, you cannot be surprised that the eyes of all the people of England are turned upon you, nor at the anxiety with which the King and all his servants wait for accounts of your movements."[1]

The orders given by Sir Henry Clinton to Lord Cornwallis, dated the 1st of June, 1780, made the security of Charleston an object of paramount importance, but at the same time authorized him to execute such movements as he might conceive would be advantageous and would extend throughout the adjacent country the dominion of the British Crown:

"Upon my departure from hence you will be pleased to take command of the troops mentioned in the enclosed

[1] Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, 2d May, 1781: Parliamentary Register, 1782–83.

return, and of all other troops now here, or that may arrive in my absence. Your Lordship will make such changes in the position of them as you may judge most conducive to his Majesty's service, for the defence of this most important post and its dependencies. At the same time, it is by no means my intention to prevent your acting offensively, in case an opportunity should offer, consistent with the *security of this place*,[1] which is always to be regarded as a primary object." [2]

This was the starting-point of the road which led Cornwallis to defeat and surrender at Yorktown.

His first project, after having provided, by the distribution of his troops, for the occupation of South Carolina, and for the strengthening of his forces by such enlistments of militia as he hoped for from the people of the reconquered province, was an incursion into North Carolina, with the intention of adding that State to the territory which had been regained, and of holding it as an outpost upon the north against the invasion of South Carolina and Georgia. For, as he said to Sir Henry Clinton, he was convinced that this was a necessary step, and that if he did not attack North Carolina the British must give up both South Carolina and Georgia and retire within the walls of Charleston.[3]

Intelligence from the North confirmed him in this belief; for, upon the representations of General Washington, Congress had consented at the end of March to strengthen the Southern army by detaching for its support the Continental troops of Maryland and Delaware, under the Baron de Kalb; and on the 13th of June the command of the Southern Department had been given to General Gates, who joined the army, then with De Kalb, on the 25th of July. General Gates was marching with

[1] Charleston.

[2] Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy.

[3] Earl Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, 6th August, 1780.

his whole force into South Carolina, when Lord Cornwallis left Charleston to meet him, on the 10th of August. The battle of Camden followed, on the 16th, in which Gates was completely defeated, the Baron de Kalb was killed, and the American army was shattered.

Thereupon Lord Cornwallis continued his expedition into North Carolina as far as Charlotte, whence he was pursuing his course toward Salisbury, when in the early part of October his advance was stopped by the unexpected news of the defeat of part of his command under Major Ferguson at King's Mountain, on the 7th of that month; and he retired to Winnsborough, in South Carolina, a point to the northwest of Camden and between it and the State line on the north.

His army having suffered considerably from the fatigues of the campaign, from fevers, and from exposure to the intense heat, to which they were not accustomed, he determined to wait at Winnsborough for reinforcements from New York. He had found anything but a reconquered country or the easy progress which he had hoped for through one of the Carolinas into the other and thence into Virginia to complete his success.

The men of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia were not terrified by the threats of punishment for any attempt to defend their land. The scaffold was erected upon which to hang them as rebels and traitors; but they, having taken their families to places of safety, were out with Sumpter and Marion, with Shelby and Williams and Campbell and Cleaveland; and they never gave up.[1] Lord Cornwallis had gained little or nothing, with the forces at his command, up to the autumn of 1780. He was back again in South Carolina, hesitating, and fearing to advance.

In the mean time, after the disastrous battle of Cam-

[1] See Bancroft's account in vol. x., chapter xvi., History of the United States.

den, Congress had determined to remove General Gates from the command of the forces in the Southern Department and to place it in more competent hands. Its choice fell upon General Nathanael Greene, who was appointed on the 30th of October, 1780;[1] and, leaving Baron Steuben at Richmond to command in Virginia, he arrived at the head-quarters of the Southern army at Charlotte on the 2d of December. Thenceforward the Continental army in the South was vigorously and skilfully led against the enemy whilst they remained in the United States.

The British commander-in-chief, greatly elated by the result of the action at Camden, conceived the feasibility of a wider conquest of the South than he had as yet attempted; and, believing that Lord Cornwallis would now encounter no serious opposition in the Carolinas, he decided to send a force into Virginia to make a diversion there with a view of aiding the movements of Cornwallis and ultimately of uniting with him. Sir Henry Clinton selected for this service General Leslie, who sailed from New York, accordingly, on the 16th of October, 1780, with about three thousand men, and instructions to enter Chesapeake Bay and to establish a post at Elizabeth River. He was to be under the command of Lord Cornwallis and to act on the James River toward the Roanoke, but was not to pass the latter without orders from his commander.

This expedition entered the James River and occupied the country upon the south side of it as far as Suffolk; though General Leslie afterward withdrew his outposts and began to fortify Portsmouth, with the intention of holding it as a permanent station. But the alarm for his own position which Lord Cornwallis felt after the victory won by the Americans at King's Mountain led him to suggest to General Leslie the expediency of uniting with him at once in South Carolina.[2] Consequently,

[1] Journals of Congress.

[2] Lord Rawdon to General Leslie, 24th October.

General Leslie left Chesapeake Bay on the 24th of November and went by sea to Charleston, where he landed on the 13th of December, after an extremely rough voyage; and he proceeded thence immediately to form a junction with Lord Cornwallis.

Chesapeake Bay having now been thrown open again by the retirement of General Leslie's force, Sir Henry Clinton decided to prepare still another expedition to operate in that direction; and, wishing, as he said, to give Lord Cornwallis's enterprise in North Carolina every assistance in his power, though he "could ill spare it," he sent forward a detachment[1] consisting of some sixteen hundred effective troops, who were put under the command of Benedict Arnold, now a brigadier-general in the British service. Colonel Dundas and Colonel Simcoe were sent along, with the unworthy task imposed upon them of watching Arnold. Sir Henry Clinton reported to Lord George Germain,[2] "This detachment is under the command of General Arnold, with whom I thought it right to send Colonels Dundas and Simcoe, as being officers of experience and much in my confidence. The objects of this expedition are nearly the same as those of the one under Major-General Leslie, but rather more positive as to the establishment of a post at Portsmouth on the Elizabeth River. I have also directed General Arnold to prepare materials for building a number of boats, that we may, as soon as possible, have a naval force in Albemarle Sound, which force, when the season is too far advanced for it to act in those waters, may be employed to great advantage in the rivers of the Chesapeake."

On the 30th of December, 1780, Arnold entered Hampton Roads, where his fleet, which had been dispersed by heavy gales, was reunited, with the exception of three

[1] 13th December, 1780: Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy.

[2] 16th December, 1780, MS. letter: quoted by Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 348.

transports and one war-vessel; these arrived, however, on the 4th of January. Arnold's instructions were to destroy, whenever possible, the magazines of the Americans; to recruit loyalists and to furnish them with arms; and to consult Colonel Dundas and Colonel Simcoe before undertaking any important measure. He was to cooperate with Lord Cornwallis if those two officers should consider it advisable, or if Lord Cornwallis should order him directly to do so.

After Lord Cornwallis had been joined in South Carolina by the detachment under General Leslie, he set out in January, 1781, for the conquest of North Carolina, with about three thousand four hundred men. The American army at that time under General Greene could not muster more than two thousand, of which one-quarter, at least, were militia.

The plan of Cornwallis was to strike General Greene a blow such as he had given to Gates at Camden, and by that single effort to decide the possession of the Carolinas. He hoped to turn Greene's position by rapid marches, and, by getting between him and Virginia, to force him to fight without his being able to receive reinforcements from that State; or, failing in that, to drive him out of North Carolina so easily as to destroy all hope of assistance from him to the people of the State, and thus to encourage a general uprising in favor of the British interests.[1] He was proceeding upon this errand when he received news of the brilliant victory gained at Cowpens by General Morgan, whom Greene had detached far to his right upon the northern boundary of South Carolina, over the famous British cavalry leader Tarleton.

Cornwallis had ordered Tarleton to watch Morgan. But, whilst watching him, Tarleton was defeated by him, on the 17th of January, 1781, in so thorough a manner

[1] Cornwallis to Lord George Germain: Ross, Cornwallis Correspondence, i. 516.

that it not only nullified the moral effect which the British commander had hoped to exert over North Carolina, but, what was still more serious, cost him quite six hundred men, a large part of his whole force, and made his position embarrassing, instead of triumphant, for, whilst he foresaw danger in continuing to advance, he was certain that a retreat would irretrievably damage him. "The unfortunate affair of the 17th of January,"[1] he wrote, "was a very unexpected and severe blow; for, besides reputation, our loss did not fall short of six hundred men. However, being thoroughly sensible that defensive measures would be certain ruin to the affairs of Britain in the Southern Colonies, this event did not deter me from prosecuting the original plan."[2]

Having no alternative, therefore, he pushed forward in pursuit of General Greene. To facilitate this, he destroyed his baggage and converted his army into a corps of light infantry. In the mean time, as General Greene's force was so far inferior that he was totally unable to contend upon an even footing with his adversary, all that the American general could do was to unite his troops and retire rapidly, without exposing himself to the danger of a battle, until he should attain a point of safety. He accomplished this, after infinite labor, by crossing the river Dan, on the 14th of February, and entering the State of Virginia.

Having succeeded at least in that part of his undertaking by which General Greene was to be driven out of North Carolina, Lord Cornwallis proceeded to Hillsborough, the capital of that State, where he raised the royal standard and, by proclamation, summoned the inhabitants to take an active part in aiding him to restore the ancient government. But he did not remain long unmolested. On the 21st of February, General Greene recrossed the Dan;

[1] Cowpens.

[2] Earl Cornwallis to Lord George Germain, March 17, 1781.

and, having received reinforcements which enabled him to take the field, he offered Lord Cornwallis battle, which the latter willingly accepted, at Guilford Court-House, in North Carolina. The action was fought on the 15th of March, 1781, and resulted in a victory for the British arms; but it was one which cost the victors so dearly that, whilst it left them in possession of the field, it reduced their strength so seriously that they were unable to continue the campaign or to take advantage of their momentary success.

Three days after the battle of Guilford Court-House, Lord Cornwallis, instead of advancing upon General Greene, as the latter had expected him to do, broke up his camp, left behind him the wounded whom he could not transport, and withdrew to Ramsey's Mills, whence, upon the approach of Greene, who had now started in pursuit, he retreated toward the sea-coast and took up his position at Wilmington, on the 7th of April, 1781. General Greene, after following the British army as far as Ramsey's Mills, gave up the pursuit, and determined, by moving directly southward, to carry the war into South Carolina, where Lord Rawdon had been left in command of the British forces.

Lord Cornwallis, on the other hand, decided upon the step which afterward proved fatal to his military career in America; namely, to leave Greene and to march directly northward, in order to enter Virginia and to join his forces with those of Arnold and Major-General Phillips, the latter of whom had come there after Arnold and was then in command.

Cornwallis left Wilmington, accordingly, on the 25th of April. It is at this point that his movements become interesting in detail, for the purposes of this narrative, in following the career of the Marquis de La Fayette in the American Revolution.

The affairs of the Southern States had already attracted

the attention of the Continental Congress, and also of General Washington, who was closely watching the movements of Lord Cornwallis and waiting for an opportunity when the means he had at hand should enable him to undertake some measure to oppose them. For he considered it so essential to the independence of the United States, and so important to the interests of their allies, to force the common enemy to relinquish their conquests in South Carolina and Georgia, that he thought no means ought to be left untried to dislodge them. This opinion he expressed to the Comte de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay, in a letter addressed to them at Newport on the 15th of December, 1780. He had heard of an embarkation then being made by the British at New York for service in the South, which was, in fact, the expedition of Arnold, preparing to replace Leslie in Virginia; though as yet General Washington had no information as to the commander of the corps or as to the number of troops included in it. He solicited the aid of the French force in the prosecution of an offensive measure which he thought might be undertaken in conjunction with the Spaniards, who, it was said, were about to set out from Havana against the British settlements in Florida, at St. Augustine and Pensacola,—his general purpose being to co-operate in such a manner as to assist the Spaniards in their expedition to Florida, and at the same time to strengthen the hands of General Greene in his contest with Cornwallis. This plan was never carried out; though it pointed the way for the events that were to follow, and served to direct the attention of the French toward the progress of the war at the South, which was shaping itself to offer the opportunities for action of which they so loyally availed themselves in 1781.

Admiral de Ternay had died at Newport on the 15th of December, 1780, before General Washington's letter arrived at the head-quarters. That communication found

the Comte de Rochambeau still there, and the French squadron under the command of the Chevalier Des Touches, a "brigadier des armées navales," who had succeeded M. de Ternay as next in rank.

M. Des Touches was not so timid a man as Admiral de Ternay had been; nor was he content to remain any longer than should be absolutely necessary in the state of inaction to which the squadron had been condemned during the whole of the preceding campaign. His first act was to make an attempt to break the blockade and to put to sea.

Two of the French frigates had gone out to await the arrival of the frigate Amazone, which was expected from France with money and supplies for the expedition, as well as with the answer of the French Government to the propositions agreed upon at the conference with General Washington at Hartford. These had been sent to France, it will be remembered, by the hand of the Vicomte de Rochambeau as a special messenger to the Court. The frigates were then awaiting at Boston an opportunity to run into Newport with a convoy; and on the 22d of January, 1781, they succeeded in effecting their purpose during a violent storm at sea, of which they took advantage to break through the lines of the British war-ships.

The storm was so damaging to the British blockading squadron, then stationed in Gardiner's Bay, on Long Island, that it not only allowed the French frigates from Boston to run in, but offered M. Des Touches an inducement to begin offensive operations at once. Of the British war-ships in Gardiner's Bay, the Culloden, a ship of the line of sixty-four guns, was driven upon a reef near Gardiner's Island; the Bedford, of seventy-four, was off New London with all her masts gone and the upper tier of her guns thrown overboard; and the America, of sixty-four, was driven to sea and given up for lost, though she returned in a shattered condition on the 8th of February.

Upon learning of this disaster, M. Des Touches immediately despatched an officer to ascertain the condition of the British, determined, if they were not still too strong for him, to go out with his whole force and attack them. From the report made to him, he concluded that he could not do so successfully; and he decided upon another plan as an alternative, which circumstances now made possible, and which was, to send an expedition into Chesapeake Bay to operate against Arnold. An appeal had been made to him for this measure by the Chevalier de La Luzerne at the solicitation of the Governor of Virginia and of Congress. M. Des Touches accordingly detached one ship of the line and two frigates, which set out from Newport on the 9th of February, under the command of M. le Gardeur de Tilly; the Comte de Rochambeau having written to General Washington on the 3d, "I think that two vessels of the line and two frigates ought to destroy Arnold's whole naval expedition in the bay, and that we now have an easy advantage of him."[1]

In view of the rapidity with which it was intended that M. de Tilly should act, it was not considered necessary to send any troops with him; for he was not to make a landing, but was merely to destroy the ships which had transported Arnold to the Chesapeake and thus leave him without naval support. As Arnold was believed to have only about two thousand men, it was supposed that the Continental forces and the militia of Virginia would be able to take care of him ashore.[2] M. Des Touches sent only one ship of the line, instead of two, because he had only one of sixty-four guns, the Eveillé, that was sheathed with copper, and he was unwilling to risk his vessels in the rivers of Virginia without that protection. He did not send a ship of seventy-four, of which there were two in the squadron (the Neptune and the Conquérant),

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.
[2] Ibid., Letters of the 1st, 3d, 8th, and 12th February, 1781.

because its draught of water would prevent it from being serviceable in-shore.

In the mean time, General Washington, who had not as yet heard of the departure of M. de Tilly, was becoming solicitous that a movement should be made against Arnold, and, perceiving by the despatch sent him under date of the 3d of February that such a measure was in contemplation by the French commanders, he wrote from his head-quarters at New Windsor, on the 15th of February, to the Comte de Rochambeau, that, as there were a variety of positions where Arnold might secure himself from a naval attack by putting his vessels under protection of land batteries, and by collecting provisions in the surrounding country of Virginia, which was especially productive, he might remain in safety until the British should have had time to repair their ships and come to his relief,—Portsmouth being a place particularly well adapted to this purpose,—and that unless the ships sent by M. Des Touches should happen upon Arnold whilst he was embarked and moving from one point to another, they would have little prospect of success. He gave it as his opinion, therefore, that it was essential that there should be a co-operation of land and naval forces, and that M. Des Touches should protect the expedition with his whole fleet. He announced, also, that, in order to give the enterprise every possible chance of success, he had placed under marching orders twelve hundred men,—which force he should have made more considerable if he had been able to spare the troops,—who were to advance to the Head of Elk River in the course of a few days, to embark there and proceed to a co-operation with the French.[1]

Before this letter reached the Comte de Rochambeau, however, M. de Tilly had started for the Chesapeake: so

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 411.

that it was not possible for M. Des Touches to act with his whole force as General Washington had proposed. General de Rochambeau replied, on the 20th of February,[1]—

"I have received the letter of the 15th with which your Excellency has honored me. I forwarded it immediately to the Chevalier Destouches, who has just sent me the reply which I enclose in this letter. It is certain that the Chevalier de La Luzerne, at the request of Congress and of the Governor of Virginia, never asked him for a greater assistance than that of some frigates and one ship of the line, without mentioning the transportation of a detachment of troops; and he exerted himself with all the diligence in his power to send out this little squadron. It is also certain that he is at this moment less strong than the English, who have been reinforced by the return of the ship America in good condition, and by the remasting of the Bedford, and that the Chevalier Destouches is weakened to the extent of the detachment sent by him to Virginia.

"If he had known earlier of your Excellency's last plan, he would perhaps have decided to go out with his whole fleet. Your Excellency may rest assured that your orders would have been obeyed by the land forces, by the detaching of one thousand men aboard the ships; and although with a harbor completely open when it is stripped of all the naval artillery, which is now used in defending the islands, but which is necessary in arming the ships, I should have been left somewhat exposed with all the transports of the convoy, the greater part of which are unable to cross the bar of Providence, we should have put the best possible face upon the matter, and should have tried, at least, in case of attack, to come off with honor."

General Washington wrote again, on the 26th of February,[2] to the Comte de Rochambeau, earnestly laying before him the situation of the Southern States, which he said were pressed upon every side, destitute of all means of resistance, of arms and of munitions of war, which, by reason of their scarcity in America and the long distance to be traversed, could not be sent thither. He added

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.
[2] Ibid.

that the Pennsylvania Line would proceed to the South as soon as it could be recruited and reorganized, and that Congress desired, if it were not incompatible with the projects of the ensuing campaign, that the Chevalier Des Touches should set on foot some enterprise to be undertaken by the French troops either to help the South directly or to make a diversion in its favor.

He wrote personally to the Chevalier Des Touches, also, on the 22d of February,[1]—

"The Count de Rochambeau will have communicated to you my propositions. The detachment mentioned to him has marched, and may arrive at the Head of Elk by the 5th or 6th of March, to proceed thence by water to the point of operation. The information you were pleased to give me, that you held the remainder of your fleet ready to protect your expedition in the Bay, was a motive for accelerating its motions. If you have it in your power to block up Arnold in the Bay, and make such a general disposition with your fleet, as will at the same time prevent succours going from this quarter to him, I shall flatter myself that this coöperation will effect the reduction of the corps now in Virginia, and the ships will then of course fall into your hands. I am sensible the safe return of the America may make a material difference in your arrangements; but, however this may be, I wait your determination to regulate my ulterior measures."

Whilst this correspondence was going on, the expedition of M. de Tilly returned to Newport, on the 24th of February, having found, as General Washington had predicted, that Arnold was inaccessible by that means, and that as he had retired into the Elizabeth River, to Portsmouth, none of the French men-of-war was able to follow him. Nevertheless, M. de Tilly's efforts were not entirely devoid of results; for he had fallen in with, and captured, the British frigate Romulus, of fifty guns (armed with forty-four), and four minor prizes, besides having burned four others and taken a quantity of provisions.

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 424.

One of his frigates, the Surveillante, in endeavoring to enter the river, had run aground, and had remained fast for twenty-four hours, having been released with great labor only after it had been lightened of its cannon and its water-casks. He also captured some important papers, among which were the instructions to Arnold, from which it was evident that the British intended to establish themselves permanently in an intrenched station at Portsmouth.

Thereupon M. Des Touches decided to carry out the project of General Washington and to operate against the enemy in Virginia with his whole fleet. The Comte de Rochambeau reported this to Washington on the 25th of February, as follows:[1]

"The letters found aboard the vessels captured by M. de Tilly have decided M. Destouches to follow in its entirety the plan given by your Excellency, to risk everything in order to prevent Arnold from establishing himself at Portsmouth, in Virginia. Your Excellency will have learned, by a letter of yesterday, that our vessels were unable to enter the Elizabeth River because there was not water enough for the ships of 64; that their cruise resulted only in the capture of the Romulus, of 44, of two privateers of 18 and 14, of a few other transports, one of which is of considerable value, and of about 500 prisoners. The letters which were found aboard these vessels announce the fixed determination to establish a post at Portsmouth; and several Tory families were captured who were returning home. M. Destouches is arming with great diligence the vessel of 44 which he has taken; and which will be able, he hopes, to run up the Elizabeth River with the frigates. He will support this expedition with his whole fleet. Your Excellency has ordered me to send with it 1000 men, and I shall send 1220; among whom will be half the grenadiers and Chasseurs under the command of the Baron de Viomênil. I add four pieces of 4, four pieces of 12, and four mortars. The navy will supply the pieces of 24 if these should be absolutely necessary; but it is presumed that for the detachments on shore those of 12 will be sufficient.

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

"As to the exposure of this harbor with about 2500 men who will be left under arms to me, with many transports to protect and very few cannon of long range, I shall do my best to prevent any damage either to our transports or to our magazines. I intend to apply, for this purpose, to the State of Boston and to that of Rhode Island to furnish me with 2000 militia during the continuance of the expedition. I trust your Excellency will approve of my using your name to the Governors of these two States.

"The great importance which it has seemed to me that your Excellency attaches to the gaining of a foothold by Arnold has determined M. Destouches to sacrifice everything with that in view."

Without waiting for a reply from the French commanders, and counting upon their co-operation in accordance with his request, General Washington had already ordered forward the detachment which he designed to send against Arnold. He gave the command of that force to the Marquis de La Fayette, on the 20th of February, with instructions as follows:[1]

"SIR,—I have ordered a detachment to be made at this post, to rendezvous at Peekskill on the 19th instant, which, together with another to be formed at Morristown from the Jersey troops, will amount to about twelve hundred rank and file. The destination of this detachment is to act against the corps of the enemy now in Virginia, in conjunction with the militia, and some ships from the fleet of the Chevalier Destouches, which he informs me sailed on the 9th instant from Newport.[2] You will take command of this detachment, which you will in the first instance march by battalions towards Pompton, there to rendezvous and afterwards to proceed with all possible despatch to the Head of Elk. You will make your arrangements with the quartermaster-general concerning the route you are to take, concerning transportation, tents, intrenching tools and other articles in his department, of which you may stand in need; with the commissary-general concerning provisions; with the clothier concerning shoes and clothing; and with General Knox concerning the artillery and

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 417.

[2] General Washington had, however, already placed the detachment under marching orders before he knew of M. de Tilly's expedition. See his letter to the Comte de Rochambeau of the 15th of February, quoted above.

stores you will want for the expedition. The result of these several arrangements you will report at head-quarters.

"When you arrive at Trenton, if the Delaware is open and boats are readily to be had, you will save time by going from thence by water to Christiana Bridge, Marcus Hook, or Chester; if you cannot avail yourself of this mode, you must proceed by land, by the route which the quartermaster and commissary may designate as most convenient for covering and supplies. You are not to suffer the detachment to be delayed for want of either provision, forage, or wagons on the route. Where the ordinary means will not suffice with certainty, you will have recourse to military impress. You will take your measures with the quartermaster-general in such a manner, that vessels may be ready on your arrival at the Head of Elk to convey you down the Bay to Hampton Roads, or to the point of operation; and you will open a previous communication with the officer commanding the ships of His Most Christian Majesty, to concert your coöperations, and to engage him to send, if it can be spared, a frigate up the Bay to cover your passage, without which, or some other armed vessels, you might be insecure.

"When you arrive at your destination, you must act as your own judgment and the circumstances shall direct. You will open a correspondence with Baron Steuben, who now commands in Virginia, informing him of your approach, and requesting him to have a sufficient body of militia ready to act in conjunction with your detachment. It will be advisable for him to procure persons in whom he can confide, well acquainted with the country at Portsmouth and in the vicinity; some, who are capable of giving you a military idea of it, and others to serve as guides.

"You should give the earliest attention to acquiring a knowledge of the different rivers, but particularly James River, that you may know what harbours can best afford shelter and security to the coöperating squadron, in case of blockade by a superior force. You are to do no act whatever with Arnold, that directly or by implication may screen him from the punishment due to his treason and desertion, which, if he should fall into your hands, you will execute in the most summary way.

"Having recommended to Count de Rochambeau to detach a land force with the fleet, that may be destined for the Chesapeake Bay (though, from the disposition which has already taken place, it is not probable that a land force will yet be sent), if the recommendation should be complied with, you will govern yourself in coöperating with the officers commanding the French troops,

agreeably to the intentions and instructions of his Most Christian Majesty, of which you were the bearer, and which, being still in your possession, it is unnecessary for me to recite.

"You will keep me regularly advised of your movements and progress; and, when the object of the detachment is fulfilled (or unfortunately disappointed), you will return to this post with it by the same route, if circumstances admit, and with as much expedition as possible. I wish you a successful issue to the enterprise, and all the glory which I am persuaded you will deserve.

"Given at Head-Quarters, New Windsor, February 20th, 1781."

These instructions were accompanied by the following note from General Washington: "The enclosed are your instructions, in the prosecution of which, if you should receive authentic intelligence of the enemy's having left Virginia, or, by adverse fortune, the detachment from Monsieur Destouches has lost its superiority in that State, and is disabled thereby to coöperate, you will return with the detachment under your command, as the enemy cannot be affected by it while they have the command of the waters; but the detachment may be capitally injured by committing itself on the water."

This expedition was planned by General Washington and put into execution with all the vigor that his resources at that time would permit, for a purpose the fulfilment of which would have been a source of intense gratification to the American people; namely, the capture and punishment of Benedict Arnold. For we have in this campaign the astonishing spectacle of that traitor, wearing the uniform and exercising the authority of a British general, sent into the State of Virginia at the head of a military force to support the interests of the King of Great Britain. It was this, above all else that took place during the American War of Independence, which discredited alike the British nation and the British arms, that they should have been represented for a moment by this detestable traitor, and that honorable British officers and British

soldiers should have been obliged to serve with him and under him. But the British Government, having taken the criminal under its protection, was careful to provide for his safety; and when the situation became critical for him in Virginia he was sent to New England, where he would be in less danger of being caught.

The detachment given to the Marquis de La Fayette was part of the Light Infantry which he had commanded in the year 1780, before the army went into winter quarters, and was composed of men taken from the regiments of the four States of New England and the State of New Jersey. A return of the clothing required by the force, dated the 20th of February, 1781,[1] made out by Lieutenant-Colonel Wm. S. Smith, makes mention of three regiments, commanded respectively by Colonel Vose, Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat, and Major Reid,—the New Jersey troops not being included, as they joined later, under Colonel Barber.

Lieutenant Ebenezer Wild, of the Massachusetts Line, in his Journal,[2] says that the detachment was joined at Morristown, on the 26th of February, by "five companies from the N. Jersey line, which completes us 3 Regiments. The first is composed of the eight first companies of the Mass^{tts} line, and commanded by Col. Vose; the two remaining companies from the Mass^{tts} line, with five from Connecticutt and one from Rhode Island, formed another commanded by Lieut. Col. Gimatt; the 3d is formed of the Jersey companies, with two from N. Hampshire and one from Gen^{l} Hazen's Regiment, and is commanded by Lieut. Col. Barber."

La Fayette moved his soldiers, without the least delay, in the direction of the Head of Elk, the point at which his instructions had directed him to embark. On the

[1] Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, October and November, 1890.

23d of February he was already at Pompton, where the difficulty of marching upon exceedingly bad roads, and a hard rain, obliged him to halt on his way to Morristown, the point of junction with the New Jersey troops who were to accompany him.[1] From Pompton, La Fayette preceded his detachment to Morristown, whence he wrote General Washington on the following day, the 24th,[2] that the heavy rain and the extreme badness of the roads added to the difficulties, but that the troops had marched with great cheerfulness and would reach Morristown early on the 25th. On the 28th, he added, they would arrive at Trenton, where he would have boats provided for them. He was setting out himself for Philadelphia on the 25th, having taken pains whilst at Morristown to deceive the enemy by the uniting of his troops and by demonstrations intended to give the impression that his object was an attempt upon Staten Island. He learned from Colonel Dayton, at Morristown, that Arnold had reported to New York having seen a French ship of the line and two frigates in Chesapeake Bay, and that he had asked for a ship to defend him, but that there was none which could be sent.

La Fayette also opened correspondence, in accordance with his instructions, with Baron Steuben, in Virginia, to whom he wrote,—

"The troops are marching through Rains and Bad Roads, But with such expedition as will accelerate our junction sooner than I expected—the detachement will be at trenton on the 28th, there to embark and go by water the greater part of the way to the Head of Elk.

"I am the more anxious to arrive as His Excellency does not think that Consistent with prudence such operations may be undertaken By Militia alone—this is also your opinion, and agrees

[1] La Fayette to Washington, Pompton, 23d February, 1781: Washington Papers, State Department.

[2] La Fayette to Washington, 24th February, 1781: Ibid.

perfectly with mine— Under these circumstances nothing will be wanting on my part to Hurry the detachment which you will find to Be an excellent Body of troops.

"I hope that the french ships will strictly Blockade Mr. Arnold, and as your position will no doubt exclude the possibility of His taking any advantage By land, I hope we May Before long give a good account of Him.

"Should He By chance make any proposition, No Communication ought to Be Held with Him that might countenance any pretension to His Being a prisoner of War as His excellency's instructions which I will show to you are very positive on this point. . . . Adieu, my dear Baron. I am Happy to be employed with you on an expedition where I Hope to avail myself of your experience and of your Advice."[1] . . .

Two days later, on the 26th of February, La Fayette was in Philadelphia, whence he sent the distinguished French engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel Gouvion, forward to Baron Steuben, to aid him in reconnoitring the enemy's works and to proceed also aboard the French ships in Chesapeake Bay, for the purpose of explaining to their commanders the importance of the expedition.[2] On the 3d of March he had arrived with his detachment at the Head of Elk, having advanced with such rapidity that he had reached there three days earlier than General Washington had expected, as, in ordering the detachment forward, he had fixed upon the 6th as the probable date of its arrival there for embarkation to Hampton Roads. La Fayette had personally superintended the shipment from Philadelphia of the munitions and supplies, after which he had pressed on with all possible speed. But he was met at the Head of Elk by the disappointment of not finding the transports ready for his men; though he consoled himself with the reflection that by great exertion he might still embark them in time to co-operate

[1] La Fayette to Steuben, from Morristown, 24th February, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[2] La Fayette to Steuben, from Philadelphia, 26th February, 1781: Ibid.

with the French squadron, which as yet had not been heard from.[1]

He wrote to Governor Jefferson, in the mean time, informing him of his approach, with a Continental detachment, to Virginia, and requesting that a large corps of militia should be prepared to unite with his twelve hundred men; he also asked that horses might be collected, especially for the artillery, as none could be embarked at the Head of Elk, that boats to land the troops, and scows for the cannon, should be provided, and that as many public and private armed vessels as could be got together should be sent to protect the expedition on its passage to the James River; for "the greater abundance of boats we can collect, the nigher to the enemy we may be sure to land," and, said he, "the first point is to guard the passes and cut off all possibility of escaping by any bold or forced push, the second to avoid being too much exposed before we come and to be in a good situation to form a junction."[2]

He learned at this time of the partial success of M. de Tilly's expedition and of its return to Newport, which he feared might discourage further operations in raising the militia of Virginia: he hastened therefore to send word to "the officer commanding before Portsmouth" that "The sailing of M. de Tilly's squadron must have disappointed your expectations, and of course relaxed the preparations against Portsmouth. But I have the pleasure to inform you that the French Admiral has determined to send there another squadron among which is the Romulus lately taken from the enemy. This intelligence I give to you under the greatest secrecy, and request you will make every preparation for a vigorous co-operation."[3]

[1] La Fayette to Washington, from the Head of Elk, 3d March, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] La Fayette to Governor Jefferson, from the Head of Elk, 3d March, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[3] From the Head of Elk, 3d March, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

From the accounts received as to the enemy's strength, he estimated Arnold's force at fifteen hundred regular troops, some Tories, and about six hundred sailors from the frigates.[1]

In the mean time, General Washington had received information that the first squadron had returned to Newport, but that M. Des Touches was fitting up the Romulus with the intention of sending that vessel back to the Chesapeake; and, being apprehensive lest this change of plan should prove a serious obstacle to the accomplishment of the purposes which he had in view when he detached La Fayette to Chesapeake Bay, he wrote immediately to the Comte de Rochambeau and to M. Des Touches announcing to them that La Fayette was pushing forward to the Head of Elk, and that he was ordered to embark there and to wait only until he should be certain that the French squadron had come again into the Chesapeake, whereupon he would proceed to a co-operation.

He also gave La Fayette additional instructions in this connection, in a letter written from the head-quarters, at New Windsor, on the 27th of February,[2] saying, "Upon your arrival at the Head of Elk, you will immediately embark the troops if the transports are ready, that not a moment's time be lost, after you receive certain advices that our friends are below. But until that matter is ascertained beyond a doubt, you will on no account leave the Elk River."

This would have detained La Fayette at the Head of Elk until he had received some communication directly or indirectly from the French commander in the bay; though he hoped that his countrymen would send him a frigate immediately to convoy him in safety to the point of co-operation. He was disappointed in this, however,

[1] La Fayette to Governor Jefferson, from Head of Elk, 6th March, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[2] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 440.

and he did not wait in strict accordance with the letter of these instructions. He saw, as did also General Washington, that a feeling of rivalry in the French auxiliary force, which was not entirely suppressed, though it seldom came to the surface in an open avowal, was present in the squadron sent to Chesapeake Bay, and that its effects were now becoming visible. The gentlemen engaged in that expedition evidently did not intend to help La Fayette if they could avoid it. It is likely that they were jealous of his prestige in America, in which they had no interest; nor had they any inducement to contribute toward his personal success.

The officers of the detachment sent from France had already promised one another, whilst they were upon the voyage to America, that they would not serve under La Fayette; and they had begged the Comte de Rochambeau not to employ them under him. There was one exception, indeed, in the case of the Duc de Lauzun, who commanded a legion of cavalry under Rochambeau, and who, at the time of the preparations for La Fayette's detachment toward the Chesapeake, asked to be sent with him, although, as he said, he "had made war as a colonel long before La Fayette had left school;"[1] but he was censured in the army for this, especially by the Marquis de Laval, colonel of the regiment Bourbonnais, and M. de Rochambeau declined to grant his request.[2]

It is probable that if the squadron of M. Des Touches had ever come into Chesapeake Bay it would have taken but slight notice of La Fayette at the Head of Elk beyond what the American Commander-in-Chief had required of it by positive orders. It was exceedingly unlikely that the French would send a frigate up to him; and La Fayette knew that, for he did not wait long enough to allow the question to arise. He embarked his troops, and,

[1] Mémoires du Duc de Lauzun, Paris, 1822.

[2] See Balch, The French in America, Philadelphia, 1891, p. 128.

leaving them to await his return, went down the bay to ask for the frigate himself.

Indeed, M. Des Touches had plainly exhibited this spirit of rivalry before General Washington, even when his squadron was about to leave Newport to co-operate against Arnold; for the Commander-in-Chief wrote to La Fayette on the 1st of March,[1] "The Chevalier expects to sail the 5th of this month, so that you will arrive at the Head of Elk, before he appears in the Bay. He seems to make a difficulty, which I do not comprehend, about protecting the passage of your detachment down the Bay; but, as it is entirely without foundation, I take it for granted it will cease on his arrival. It is of the greatest importance to the expedition, as well as for the honor of our arms, that you should be on the spot to co-operate." La Fayette, better acquainted with the personal feeling toward himself among his countrymen, understood the difficulty: he knew that the French officers preferred to retain for themselves the glory of their own actions, and that they had nothing to share with him. They were older men than he (those of high military rank, at least), and they resented his presence with the rank of major-general, which, of course, would outrank most of them in the expeditions jointly undertaken by the allied forces.

He replied to General Washington's letter of the 1st of March,—

"From what I hear of the difficulties to convoy us down the bay, I very much apprehend that the winds will not permit any frigate to come up. Count de Rochambeau thinks his troops equal to the business, and wishes that they alone may display their zeal and shed their blood for an expedition which all America has so much at heart. The measures he is taking may be influenced by laudable motives, but I suspect they are not entirely free from

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 444.

selfish considerations. God grant this may not be productive of bad consequences." [1]

The Baron de Vioménil, major-general and second under M. de Rochambeau, who now commanded the land forces sent with M. Des Touches, had given it to be understood before he left Newport that he regarded himself as an independent corps commander; and by his instructions, which were assented to by General Washington, he was authorized to act directly with the militia of Virginia, without awaiting the arrival of La Fayette, in case that officer should be delayed, "if the welfare of the service so required." [2]

No doubt the necessary flexibility of these instructions, in view of an operation which depended upon the junction of two bodies of men far removed from each other and dissimilarly situated, made it imperative that there should be an alternate provision in the event of the happening of any of the hundred accidents which were possible. But it is evident that La Fayette comprehended the situation; for he said in the same letter to General Washington of the 8th of March, "Baron de Vioménil will also want to do everything alone;" and he added, "As to the French troops, their zeal is laudable, and I wish their chiefs would reserve it for the time when we may co-

[1] From Elk, 8th March, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 387.

[2] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, 5th and 7th March, 1781: "Instructions pour M. le Baron de Vioménil. Du 5 Mars, 1781. L'objet de ce détachement est, concurremment avec l'escadre et les troupes américaines, de tâcher de détruire celui qui est aux ordres d'Arnold en Virginie, que l'on dit avoir pris poste à Portsmouth, à l'embouchure de la rivière d'Elisabeth, dans la rivière de James. M. le baron de Vioménil est prévenu que le général Washington a fait partir de son armée un pareil détachement qui doit être rendu dans les quinze premiers jours de mars sur la baie de Chesapeak, à l'entrée de la rivière d'Elk. . . .

"Du 7 Mars. Le général Washington, ici présent, autorise M. le baron de Vioménil à agir tout de suite, si le bien du service l'exige, concurremment avec les milices du pays, sans attendre le détachement qu'il a fait partir de son armée, en cas que les circonstances l'auraient retardé."

operate with an assurance of success." He, on his side, was anxious that the Americans under his command should be present, and should enjoy part of the distinction if any were to be won; indeed, he determined that they should be there if his own efforts could accomplish that result,— that they should not have come almost within reach of the enemy and then be left out, to shift for themselves.

"I heartily feel, my dear general, for the honour of our arms," he continued, "and think it would be derogatory to them had not this detachment some share in the enterprise. This consideration induces me to embark immediately, and our soldiers will gladly put up with the inconveniences that attend the scarcity of vessels. We shall have those armed ones (though the largest has only twelve guns), and with this everybody assures us that we may go without any danger to Annapolis. For my part I am not yet determined what to do; but if I see no danger to our small fleet in going to Annapolis, and if I can get Commodore Nicholson to take command of it, I shall perhaps proceed in a small boat to Hampton, where my presence can alone enable me to procure a frigate, and where I will try to cool the impetuosity or correct the political mistakes of both barons." [1]

"Whichever determination I take, a great deal must be personally risked, but I hope to manage things so as to commit no imprudence with the excellent detachment whose glory is as dear, and whose safety is much dearer, to me than my own."

In the mean time, a letter from General Greene had informed General Washington that Lord Cornwallis, with twenty-five hundred men, was advancing with great rapidity through North Carolina, and that Greene, whose force was much inferior, was retiring before him and had determined to pass the Roanoke River. General Washington modified his former instructions to La Fayette, in view of the danger which appeared to threaten the Southern army, and in order, if an opportunity should arise, to strengthen the position of General Greene by sending

[1] The Baron de Viominil and the Baron Steuben, between whom also he evidently feared an outbreak of rivalry.

to his aid so valuable a reinforcement. He said to La Fayette, therefore,[1]—

"This intelligence, and an apprehension that Arnold may make his escape before the fleet can arrive in the Bay, induces me to give you greater latitude than you had in your original instructions. You are at liberty to concert a plan with the French general and naval commander for a descent into North Carolina, to cut off the detachment of the enemy, which has ascended Cape Fear River, intercept if possible Cornwallis, and relieve General Greene and the southern States. This, however, I think ought to be a secondary object, and only attempted in case of Arnold's retreat to New York, or in case you should think his reduction would be attended with too much delay, and that the other enterprise would be more easy, and, from circumstances, more necessary. There should be strong reasons to induce a change of our first plan against Arnold, if he is still in Virginia."

The next day after having written this letter, General Washington left his head-quarters and set out for Newport, in order to consult personally with the French commanders as to the expedition, and to hasten it forward. Arriving at Newport on the 6th, he went immediately on board the flag-ship, where he found the troops embarked and the ships nearly ready to put to sea. On the evening of the 8th of March, M. Des Touches finally set sail; and General Washington sent word to La Fayette, "I have the pleasure to inform you, that the whole fleet went out with a fair wind this evening about sunset. You may possibly hear of their arrival in the Chesapeake before this letter reaches you; should you not, you will have everything prepared for falling down the Bay at a moment's warning."[2]

La Fayette was ready to carry out his part of the enterprise. On the 9th of March he was at the mouth of the Elk River, on board the Dolphin, with his little fleet

[1] 1st March, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 445.

[2] From Newport, 8th March, 1781, ten o'clock P.M.: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 447.

under the protection of the Nesbitt, of twelve guns, and another vessel which carried the battery of Colonel Ebenezer Stevens, who had joined the expedition at Philadelphia; and he was to be joined by two more small vessels, one with eight guns and another with six, from Baltimore. He dropped down the bay, with this escort, as far as Annapolis, to which point he considered it perfectly safe to proceed, because no vessel of the enemy had ever come up so far; and if a cruiser should even be met with, he was strong enough to defend himself.

But in order to carry out the intentions of General Washington it was necessary to advance much beyond that; and he could do so only under the protection of a man-of-war. If the French naval commander should send up one of his frigates to protect the expedition against the British cruisers in Chesapeake Bay, the junction would be made easy and La Fayette would be prepared to co-operate instantly. He knew, however, that this assistance would not be given him unless General Washington had expressly ordered it upon his arrival at Newport, or unless he should present his request for it himself in such a manner that a failure to comply would be tantamount to a refusal to co-operate toward the results for which the combined expedition was intended. He determined, therefore, to leave his force at Annapolis, where it would be safe under the protection of Commodore Nicholson, and to go in a small boat down to the mouth of the Chesapeake, where he should be able to communicate with the French squadron immediately upon its arrival. He happened to have with him a young gentleman of the highest distinction in France, whose presence at an interview with the French commander would add great force to a demand made by La Fayette, and whose testimony might be exceedingly valuable, afterward, as to what had taken place: this was an intimate friend of his, the Comte de Charlus, an officer upon the staff of M. de Rochambeau,

who, like many other gentlemen of the expedition, had been visiting the head-quarters of the army and the battle-fields about Philadelphia, as the guest of La Fayette. This officer was the only son of the Marquis de Castries, at that time Secretary of the Navy in France. La Fayette invited him to go upon the expedition down Chesapeake Bay; and he wrote of his determination to General Washington, "With a full conviction that (unless you arrived in time at Rhode Island) no frigate will be sent to us, I think it my duty to the troops I command, and the country I serve, to overlook some little personal danger, that I may ask for a frigate myself; and in order to add weight to my application, I have clapped on board my boat the only son of the minister of the French Navy, whom I shall take out to speak if circumstances require it."[1]

Circumstances did not require it, however, as the event proved; for neither La Fayette nor M. de Charlus had an opportunity of exerting his influence with the commander of the French squadron, because that officer did not reach Chesapeake Bay. When M. Des Touches left Newport, the chances of success were already against him, since, notwithstanding the repeated warnings of General Washington as to the necessity for making haste, both to prevent Arnold from escaping and to secure the advantage of position before the British in Gardiner's Bay could repair their fleet and put to sea, he had allowed valuable time to be lost; and, even after his fleet was declared to be quite ready, by some "unfortunate and unaccountable delay in their quitting Newport, the wind being as favorable to them and as adverse to the enemy as Heaven could furnish,"[2] M. Des Touches lost twenty-four hours more,

[1] To General Washington, on board the Dolphin, Elk River, 9th March, 1781: Correspondence of La Fayette, American edition, i. 390.

[2] Washington to Philip Schuyler, 23d March, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 460.

which were said to have been employed in completing some repairs upon one of his vessels, but which he could not afford at that juncture to throw away. That delay caused the failure of the expedition; and but for that failure it is likely that the nation would have had an opportunity to rejoice over the capture of Benedict Arnold.

Admiral Arbuthnot, who moved with much greater celerity at Gardiner's Bay, discovered the departure of the French from Newport, and on the 10th of March, in the morning, he put to sea with his fleet in pursuit. He overtook the fleet of M. Des Touches at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, and gave him battle at once, on the 16th of March, 1781. The engagement which followed was a stubborn contest for supremacy, in which the forces were nearly equal, the French with more men and the British with more guns, each combatant having eight ships of the line and a few frigates. But, although the French fought with conspicuous valor, which was afterward recognized by the thanks of Congress,[1] M. Des Touches was forced to withdraw. On the 26th of March he returned with all his ships to Newport.

The result of this encounter was that the control of Chesapeake Bay passed to the British, whose fleet was now left in undisturbed possession; and it enabled Sir Henry Clinton to send out from New York a strong detachment, on the 21st of March, under General Phillips, to reinforce Arnold.

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[1] Journals of Congress, 4th April, 1781. And see Washington to Alexander McDougall in Congress, 31st March, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 464.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LA FAYETTE'S EXPEDITION TO CHESAPEAKE BAY.

La Fayette, in the mean time, having left his detachment at Annapolis, had proceeded in a small boat down the Chesapeake. On the 14th of March he reached Yorktown, whence he wrote to General Wayne, who was still in Pennsylvania contemplating a movement to join this expedition against Arnold with a force of Pennsylvania troops, that he was hourly expecting the French ships, and that if Arnold had not escaped before they came he would be attacked immediately after their arrival and that of the detachment from Annapolis.[1]

From Yorktown La Fayette announced his presence to Baron Steuben, by the following letter, written in French:[2]

"York, 14th March, 1781.

"Here I am, my dear Baron, in consequence of a new arrangement which I shall explain to you. I anticipate with great impatience the pleasure of seeing you, and I shall communicate to you the very important object which has caused me to precede the detachment. As soon as we have talked with each other we shall send an express to the General, who is doubtless impatiently waiting to hear from us."

And upon the following day he wrote to General Washington,—

"On my arrival yesterday afternoon I found that Baron de Steuben had been very active in making preparations, and, agreeably to what he tells me, we shall have five thousand militia ready

[1] To General Wayne, 15th March, 1781, from York: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] Sparks Papers, Harvard College Library.

to operate. This, with the Continental detachment, is equal to the business, and we might very well do without any land force from Newport. . . . In your first letter to the Baron, I wish, my dear General, you would write to him that I have been much satisfied with his preparations. I want to please him, and harmony shall be my first object."[1]

He went then to Williamsburg, where he continued, on the 17th, in the most energetic manner, to make preparations for the enterprise, corresponding with the Governor of Virginia about the militia, about provisions and supplies, and asking, in default of horses, for oxen to draw the cannon.[2] Although he was surprised to hear nothing of the squadron, he went on to the camp of General Muhlenberg, who was posted, with a part of the Virginia militia, at Suffolk. He advanced toward Portsmouth, with Muhlenberg, at the head of a small body of troops, near enough to the enemy's works to bring on a skirmish; but lack of ammunition prevented him from getting beyond the outposts to reconnoitre the position, and he was still before Portsmouth when word was brought to him, on the 20th of March, that a fleet had come to anchor within the Capes. He had no doubt that this was the squadron of M. Des Touches; but, having sent a French officer from York to ascertain its identity, he soon discovered that these were not the ships he was expecting; "and nothing could equal my surprise," he said, "in hearing that the fleet certainly belonged to the enemy."[3]

He reported his movements to General Washington, as follows, in his letter of the 23d of March, from Williamsburg:

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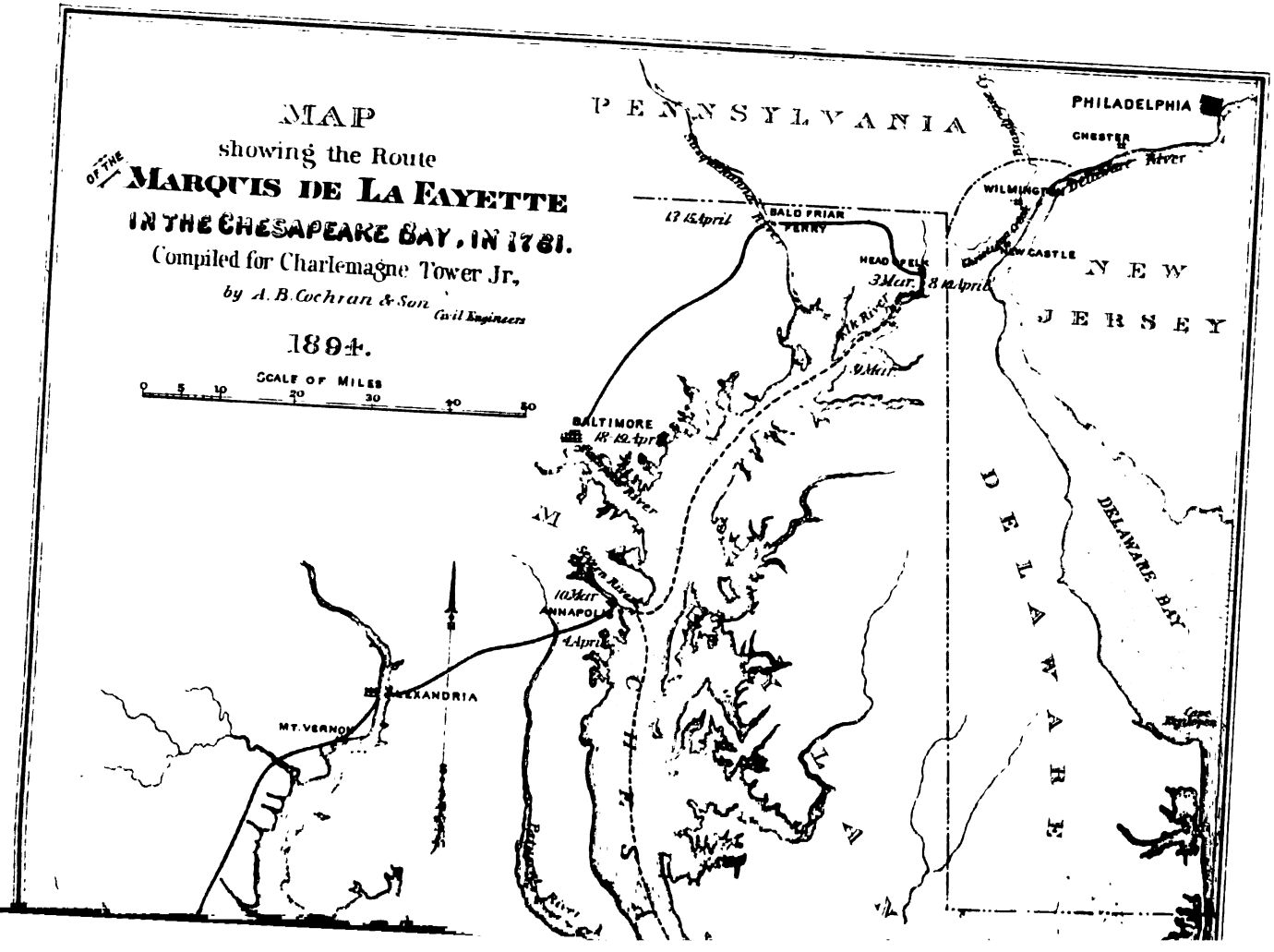
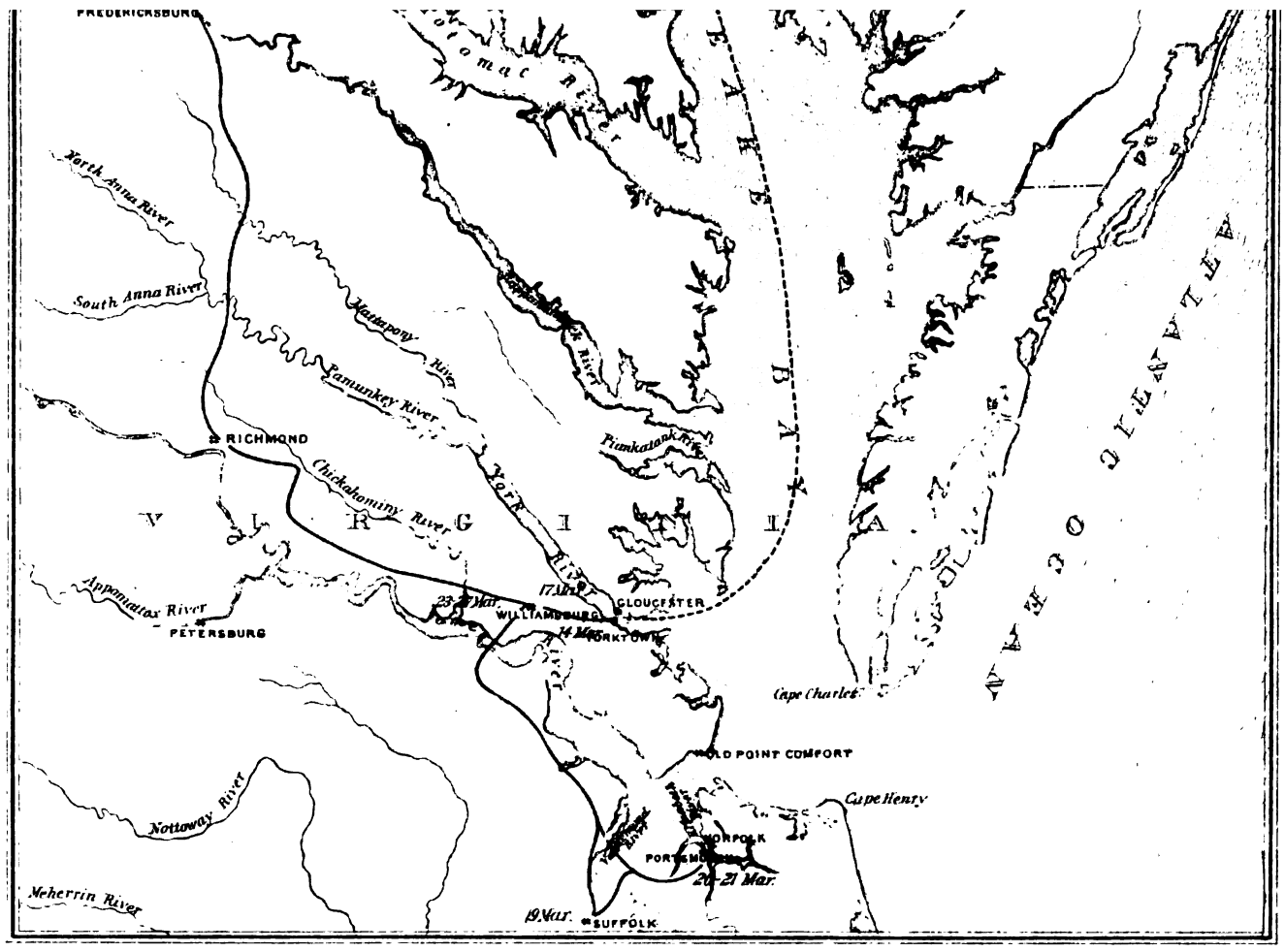
[1] Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution, iii. 264.

[2] To Governor Jefferson, from Williamsburg, 17th March, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[3] To General Washington, from Williamsburg, 23d March, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 391; also to Governor Jefferson, same date: Lossing Collection of MSS.


MAP
showing the Route
OF THE
MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE
IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY, IN 1781.
Compiled for Charlemagne Tower Jr.
by A. B. Cochran & Son
Civil Engineers
1894.
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
CHESTER
Delaware River
WILMINGTON
NEW CASTLE
NEW JERSEY
BALD FRIAR FERRY
13 to April
HEAD OF ELK
3 Mar.
8 to April
Elk River
9 Mar.
BALTIMORE
18 to 19 April
Patapsco River
10 Mar.
ANNAPOLIS
4 April
Severn River
ALEXANDRIA
MT. VERNON
Potomac River
DELAWARE
DELAWARE BAY


FREDERICKSBURG
Potomac River
North Anna River
South Anna River
Mattapony River
Pamunkey River
Pamunkey River
RICHMOND
Chickahominy River
VIRGINIA
York River
Appomattox River
PETERSBURG
17 May
23 May
WILLIAMSBURG
GLOUCESTER
14 May
YORKTOWN
James River
Cape Charles
OLD POINT COMFORT
Cape Henry
Nottoway River
NORFOLK
PORTSMOUTH
20, 21 Mar.
Meherrin River
19 May
SUFFOLK
CHESAPEAKE BAY
ATLANTIC OCEAN

"Having received your excellency's letter, by which the sailing of the French fleet became a matter of certainty, I determined to transport the detachment to Annapolis, and did it for many essential reasons. The navigation of the bay is such, that the going in and the going out of Elk River requires a different wind from those which are fair to go up and down the bay. Our stopping at Annapolis, and making some preparations on the road to Carolina, might be of use to deceive the enemy. But, above all, I thought, with your excellency, that it was important both to the success of the operation and the honour of our arms, that the detachment should be brought to co-operate; and, from the time when the French were to sail, and the winds that blew for some days, I had no doubt but that our allies were in the Chesapeak before we could arrive at Annapolis.

"Owing to the good disposition of Commodore Nicholson, whom I requested to take charge of our small fleet, the detachment was safely lodged in the harbour of Annapolis; and in the conviction that my presence here was necessary, not so much for preparations which Baron de Steuben provided, as for settling our plans with the French, and obtaining an immediate convoy for the detachment, I thought it better to run some risk than to neglect anything that could forward the success of the operation, and the glory of the troops under my command.

"On my arrival at this place, I was surprised to hear that no French fleet had appeared, but attributed it to delays and chances so frequent in naval matters. My first object was to request that nothing be taken for this expedition which could have been intended for, or useful to, the southern army, whose welfare appeared to me more interesting than our success. My second object has been, to examine what had been prepared, to gather and forward every requisite for a vigorous co-operation, besides a number of militia, amounting to five thousand; I can assure your excellency that nothing has been wanting to ensure a complete success.

"As the position of the enemy had not yet been reconnoitred, I went to General Muhlenberg's camp, near Suffolk, and after he had taken a position nearer to Portsmouth, we marched down with some troops to view the enemy's works. This brought on a trifling skirmish, during which we were able to see something; but the insufficiency of ammunition, which had been for many days expected, prevented my engaging far enough to push the enemy's outposts, and our reconnoitring was postponed to the 21st,—when, on the 20th, Major McPherson, an officer for whom

I have the highest confidence and esteem, sent me word from Hampton, where he was stationed, that a fleet had come to anchor within the Capes. So far it was probable, that this fleet was that of M. Destouches, that Arnold himself appeared to be in great confusion, and his vessels, notwithstanding many signals, durst not, for a long time, venture down."

In the mean time La Fayette ascertained definitively that the vessels then within the Capes were those of the enemy, and not the French fleet from Newport.

"Upon this intelligence," said he, "the militia were removed to their former position, and I requested Baron de Steuben (from whom, out of delicacy, I would not take command until the co-operation was begun, or the continental troops arrived) to take such measures as would put out of the enemy's reach the several articles that had been prepared. . . .

"Having certain accounts that the French had sailed on the 8th, with a favourable wind, I must think that they are coming to this place, or were beaten in an engagement, or are gone somewhere else. In these cases, I think it my duty to stay here until I hear something more, which must be in a little time. But, as your excellency will certainly recall a detachment composed of the flower of each regiment, whose loss would be immense to the army under your immediate command, and as my instructions are to march them back as soon as we lose the naval superiority in this quarter, I have sent them orders to move at the first notice, which I will send to-morrow or the day after, or upon a letter from your excellency, which my aide-de-camp is empowered to open.

"Had I not been here upon the spot, I am sure that I should have waited an immense time before I knew what to think of this fleet, and my presence at this place was the speediest means of forwarding the detachment either to Hampton or your excellency's immediate army."

Although the action between M. Des Touches and the British fleet had taken place on the 16th of March, La Fayette did not know it with certainty until the 24th. He reported it to General Washington on the 25th, from Williamsburg:

"My surprise at not Hearing of the french fleet was, I confess, very great, nor could I Reconcile my Mind to this Uncertainty. But intelligences Received yesterday Have put it out of doubt that they Have done their Best endeavours towards the co-operation, and My Accounts Being gathered from Many quarters, and from Men who were at the first Engagement,[1] your Excellency may depend upon their veracity.

"On the Sixteenth ins^{t} Both fleets fell in near the Capes with Each other—they Both consisted of 8 ships of the Line, fifties included, with the difference of twenty guns in favor of the Ennemy. Each ship of the line and each frigat singly engaged a partner, and the Action lasted during three glasses—the Ennemy Had two 74 much worsted (one of them Had 65 men Killed), the London suffered in Her Rigging, and the British fleet sheard off for Chesapeak while the french stood in a line formed in good order—the Ennemy Have sent their wounded up to Portsmouth, taken all the sailors and Marines at that place, and Refitted their damaged ships—they were also Reinforced from Portsmouth By the Charon, a 44 that can be made a fifty, and two large frigats." [2]

The British fleet, which had gone out of the Chesapeake on the 24th of March, returned to Lynn Haven Bay upon the day following, bringing with it a convoy of transports, which evidently bore the detachment sent from New York under General Phillips. Its reappearance, with every sign of its remaining unmolested, convinced La Fayette of what was the fact (although he did not then know of M. Des Touches's having returned to Newport), that the expedition had failed; and he decided to make the best of his way back to Annapolis. In reporting this decision to General Washington, he said,—

"The Return of the British fleet with vessels that must Be transports from New York, is a circumstance which destroys every prospect of an operation against Arnold. The number of

[1] The sound of thunder heard on the day after the British fleet had gone beyond the Capes led to the erroneous impression that a second action had taken place.

[2] To General Washington, from Williamsburg, 25th March, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

men is not what I am afraid of, and the french and Continental troops, joined with the militia, must be equal to a pretty serious siege. But since the British fleet Have Returned and think themselves safe in this Bay, I Entertain very little Hopes of Seeing the french flag in Hampton Road.

"The Expenses of this Expedition are very great, and the minds of the Virginians are so disposed as to make me more obstinate to pursue the Expedition. Upon its success a great deal depended, particularly for Gen[l] Greene's army. Never Has an operation Been more Ready (on our side) nor Conquest more certain. But since we must give it up, I shall Return to Annapolis, where the troops may Have Received orders from you, or I may Have some letters directed to me. If none are arrived, I shall Return to Head-quarters, and march the detachment as fast as possible." [1]

"As matters have turned out," he continues, "it would Have Been Better I had not Brought the troops to Annapolis, But the amount of the french fleet could not then Be questioned, and this Removal of our troops was the Best Means I could think of to level all difficulties of a convoy.—As to my personal Motions, they were necessary to get intelligence and decide matters." [2]

La Fayette returned by land, therefore, with all diligence to Annapolis, stopping by the way, however, in order to take advantage of the opportunity which offered itself of visiting General Washington's mother, at Fredericksburg, as well as to yield to a temptation which he evidently could not resist, to see Mount Vernon,—an employment of his time which he compensated for, as he reported to the Commander-in-Chief, by riding in the night:

"I confess I could not resist the ardent desire I had of seeing your relations, and above all your mother, at Fredericksburg. For that purpose I went some miles out of my way; and, in order to conciliate my private happiness to duties of a public nature,

[1] To General Washington, from Williamsburg, 26th March, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] See, also, La Fayette's letter to Governor Jefferson, from Williamsburg, 27th March: Lossing Collection of MSS.

I recovered, by riding in the night, those few hours which I had consecrated to my satisfaction. I had also the pleasure of seeing Mount Vernon, and was very unhappy that my duty and my anxiety for the execution of your orders prevented my paying a visit to Mr. Custis." [1]

On the 4th of April he had arrived at Annapolis,[2] where he found that his detachment was blockaded by two small British vessels, the Hope, carrying twenty guns, and the Monk, carrying eighteen. His anxiety was daily increasing to return to the main army, according to his instructions, now that the expedition had failed; and, whilst he regretted having left the Head of Elk, the important consideration in his mind then was to devise some plan for moving back there. To go by land was not practicable, with all his baggage and artillery, which there were no means of transporting. He adopted a project, therefore, proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Stevens, for reaching it by water, which proved entirely successful. This was to arm two merchant sloops of about sixty tons' burden, placing some volunteers and two of Colonel Stevens's eighteen-pound cannon, with some smaller pieces, upon one of them, and two hundred volunteers, with more cannon, upon the other, and then to bear down upon the British vessels. These were driven easily from their moorings upon the approach of this armament; and La Fayette seized the opportunity, whilst the channel was clear, to bring his detachment safely to the Head of Elk.[3] The movement was made on the 6th of April, under the leadership of Commodore Nicholson; and La Fayette, who had remained to bring up the rear, arrived at the Head of Elk himself on the 8th, almost

[1] To General Washington, from Head of Elk, 8th April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 397.

[2] La Fayette to Steuben, from Annapolis, 4th April, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[3] See an interesting account of this exploit, by Mr. John Austin Stevens, in the Magazine of American History, i. 605.

exactly a month from the day when he had set out from there for Annapolis.[1]

The obligation upon the part of La Fayette to return now with his detachment to head-quarters was unequivocal, because General Washington's instructions upon this subject were specific; and he has been very unjustly criticised by the biographer of Steuben for not having decided to go to General Greene's relief, at a time when to do so would have been a direct disobedience of orders. Indeed, that writer went out of his way to fling at La Fayette an insult for which there is absolutely no justification,[2] for General Washington's orders to him were, as we have seen, "when the object of the detachment is fulfilled (or unfortunately disappointed), you will return to this post with it by the same route, if circumstances admit, and with as much expedition as possible." La Fayette would have had no right to go to General Greene under these circumstances. On the contrary, General Washington was counting upon his return to the main army; and, even after Washington knew that M. Des Touches was back in Newport, and that the expedition had failed, he wrote to La Fayette, from New Windsor, on the 5th of April, "I imagine the detachment will be upon its march this way before this reaches you," and he directed him to leave his artillery behind

[1] La Fayette to Washington, from Elk, 8th April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 397.

[2] Kapp, Life of Steuben, New York, 1859, p. 414, says, "Lafayette, whose troops had not advanced farther than Annapolis, returned by water to the Head of Elk, and prepared to join the main army on the banks of the Hudson. It would be impossible to understand this movement on his part, were it not for the reason, that in consequence of the failure of the arrival of the French fleet, he presumed his task at an end. With true French ardor for flourish he expected to capture Arnold, and withdrew when he found that the glory at which he aimed could not be won. The critical state of affairs in the South should have prevented Lafayette from drawing off his troops to the northward, the more so as the force of the enemy was lessened in the North by the detachment under Phillips, which arrived in Portsmouth while Lafayette was still in Williamsburg."

for the Pennsylvanians to take up on their way to the South.

It was not until the 6th of April that General Washington determined to allow La Fayette to go to the South. When he arrived at that decision, and whilst he was writing the order, at New Windsor, La Fayette's detachment was returning, according to his instructions, from Annapolis, and was proceeding to the Head of Elk. On the other hand, instead of abandoning General Greene, La Fayette was at that moment doing all in his power for General Greene's welfare, as he bears testimony himself in his letter from Annapolis to Baron Steuben[1] on the 4th of April, by which he shows that he had decided to send his field-pieces to Greene, the day before General Washington's letter, directing him to do so, was written: he said to Steuben,—

"Your late favor mentioning the arrival of Co^{l} Morris came yesterday to hand. I hasten to send on my answer least you should be gone before this arrives at Richmond. I am sorry of your disappointment on account of your Recruits, and the more so as General Greene seems to be in a great need of men and ammunition; the first article I cannot supply him with as my instructions are positive, and my zeal cannot be farther exerted but in recommendations to my friends in Maryland and Pennsylvania. On the second point I think I may do something, and instead of taking with me my field pieces and ammunition I send them to the southern army where I hope they will be serviceable. The four six-pounders with 300 rounds each and near hundred thousand cartridges will be immediately sent by Governor Lee to Fredericksburg where I hope you will obtain horses and waggons to carry them to the southern army."

Instead, however, of returning to the main army at the winter quarters, as he anticipated, he received orders at the Head of Elk which entirely changed his course, and which, by turning him again toward the seat of active

[1] Sparks Papers, Harvard College Library.

operations at the South, gave him immediate service in the field in what proved to be one of the most important campaigns of the war. It was in this campaign, also, that the Marquis de La Fayette found the opportunity of exhibiting, better than upon any other occasion during the Revolution, his own personal judgment and courage, under circumstances which called for these qualities, and of developing his own military skill, of which he gave indubitable proof; because he was thrown largely upon his own resources, with a detached command, against an active, wary, and determined enemy. His conduct was a valuable contribution to the cause of American freedom. His faithful service led up, step by step, to the movement by which the British army was brought to defeat; and La Fayette shared in the glory of the final triumph, of which he had fairly won an honorable part.

The information that a detachment under General Phillips had been sent out from New York to Chesapeake Bay had reached the head-quarters of the Continental army and had aroused the attention of all the general officers to the gravity of the situation in the Southern States, where General Greene was contending against the enemy. Greene's force was inadequate, under any circumstances, to give him the mastery; and he would be thrown into imminent peril if the largely increased detachment of the British in Virginia, now under Arnold and General Phillips, should move to co-operate with Lord Cornwallis, which it was evidently the intention of Sir Henry Clinton that they should do. If Cornwallis should return against General Greene from the south, and the Virginia army should move upon him from the north, his communication with the Continental army was likely to be cut off; he might even be surrounded and possibly forced to surrender.

General Washington decided, therefore, to assist General Greene at once, and to avert, by every possible

means, the danger of his defeat,—a blow which at that time would have been destructive to the Continental army, if not, indeed, fatal to the American cause. Baron Steuben, General Muhlenberg, General Weedon, and General Nelson were contesting the ground in Virginia; but their troops were composed of militia, not well prepared nor well equipped for a serious campaign such as appeared now about to open. They were to be supported by the Pennsylvania Line, under General Wayne, which was being equipped as rapidly as possible to move toward the south; but, as every moment that could be saved was valuable in providing a reinforcement, it was important to act at once. La Fayette was well advanced toward the point where the need lay; he had an unusually well trained and well armed body of Continental troops ready for service, who could now reach Virginia more easily and more quickly than any other detachment of the army; and General Washington determined to send him there.

When La Fayette arrived at the Head of Elk, therefore, and whilst he was preparing to march back to the winter quarters, he received the orders, as we have said, which changed his course.

General Washington had returned to his head-quarters, at New Windsor, on the 20th of March, after an absence of eighteen days (since the 2d) upon the visit to the French commander at Newport. He lamented the miscarriage of an enterprise which, as he said in writing to La Fayette, had promised so well for success, but, he went on, "we must console ourselves in the thought of having done everything practicable to accomplish it. I am certain that the Chevalier Destouches exerted himself to the utmost to gain the Chesapeake. The point upon which the whole turned, the action with Admiral Arbuthnot, reflects honor upon the Chevalier and upon the marine of France."

In replying to La Fayette's report upon the moving of

his detachment to Annapolis, he said, "As matters have turned out, it is to be wished that you had not gone out of the Elk. But I never judge of the propriety of measures by after events. Your move to Annapolis, at the time you made it, was certainly judicious."[1] As he had not decided to send La Fayette to Virginia when he wrote that letter, he directed him to leave his heavy artillery at Baltimore, or at any safe place, and to leave also at some convenient point the light cannon and the two smallest mortars with their ammunition and stores, for the first division of the Pennsylvanians, who would take them southward when they came; he directed him, further, to inform General Wayne, upon arriving at Philadelphia, where these had been stored.

Upon the following day, however, General Washington wrote again to La Fayette and gave him the instructions which finally sent him to Virginia:[2]

"NEW WINDSOR, 6 April, 1781.

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—Since my letter to you of yesterday, I have attentively considered of what vast importance it will be to reinforce General Greene as speedily as possible; more especially as there can be little doubt, that the detachment under General Phillips, if not part of that now under the command of General Arnold, will ultimately join or in some degree coöperate with Lord Cornwallis. I have communicated to the general officers, at present with the army, my sentiments on the subject; and they are unanimously of opinion, that the detachment under your command should proceed and join the southern army. Your being already three hundred miles advanced, which is nearly half way, is the reason that operates against any which can be offered in favor of marching that detachment back. You will therefore, immediately on the receipt of this, turn the detachment to the southward. Inform General Greene, that you are upon your march to join him, and take his direction as to your route, when you begin to approach him. Previously to that, you will be

[1] From New Windsor, 5th April, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 468.

[2] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 469.

guided by your own judgment, and by the roads on which you will be most likely to find subsistence for the troops and horses. It will be well to advise Governor Jefferson of your intended march through the State of Virginia; or perhaps it might answer a good purpose, were you to go forward to Richmond yourself, after putting the troops in motion and having made some necessary arrangements for their progress.

"You will now take with you the light artillery and smallest mortars, with their stores and the musket cartridges. But let these follow under a proper escort, rather than impede the march of the detachment, which ought to move as expeditiously as possible without injury to them. The heavy artillery and stores you will leave at some proper and safe place, if it cannot be conveniently transported to Christiana River, from whence it will be easily got to Philadelphia."

This letter, which took but two days to reach La Fayette, and came to his hand, at the Head of Elk, on the 8th of April, was a surprise to him. His preparations for the return were then made, and he had taken steps, upon his own responsibility, to send to General Greene several pieces of artillery, with powder and musket cartridges which he did not expect to be able to use himself. He was even in doubt whether General Washington would have ordered him to the South if he had known that he was already at the Head of Elk instead of at Annapolis, where he was believed still to be. This seemed to him an important consideration; for if he were to return to Annapolis "we cannot expect the same good luck of frightening the enemy," he said, "who must know how despicable our preparations are; and we must, at least, wait for the return of look-out boats which, if sent immediately, will not possibly return under five or six days." Nevertheless, he replied to General Washington that he should make immediate preparations to carry out his orders, and that, as several days must pass before his men could be got ready, he should be able to have word from the head-quarters in answer to his report of his present situation, and in the mean time should "use

his best endeavours to be ready to move either way as soon as possible."

Whilst La Fayette himself expressed entire readiness to go wherever the good of the service required him, this change of plan was exceedingly disagreeable to his men. Most of them were from the New England States, and unaccustomed to the warmer climate of the South; they dreaded the summer season in a country of which they knew little, and against which they were strongly prejudiced in point of healthfulness; and, fearing the heats and the malaria, which their imaginations exaggerated into dreadful evils, many of them deserted the ranks.

The whole detachment was badly in need of clothing and of shoes; whatever clothing the men had was, of course, such as they had been wearing in the winter at the North.

La Fayette had suggested to General Washington in his letter from the Head of Elk[1] that a junction was not then likely to be made between General Phillips and Lord Cornwallis, because, from news lately received from General Greene, it appeared that Cornwallis was so disabled as to be forced to retreat,[2] and that possibly this fact might lessen, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, the necessity of sending the light infantry detachment southward. Besides, La Fayette still hoped that some attempt might be made by the main army against New York; and in such an event he was extremely anxious to be present. It seemed to him almost impossible that the General could have abandoned his views as to New York, especially at that time, when the garrison there was weakened by the detachments which had been sent to Arnold and to Cornwallis. "Having received no particulars of your Excellency's journey to Rhode Island," he wrote, "I cannot know what change has taken place in your plans, and am

[1] 8th April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 397.
[2] After the battle of Guilford Court-House, on the 15th of March.

not able to account for the inactivity which you foresee for the grand army. Letters from Ministers, letters from my friends, intelligences from other quarters, everything was combined to flatter me with the hope that our grand and decisive object would be in contemplation. I then was not displeased with the dispositions of the enemy that weakened that place. It is probable that your Excellency's plans have changed, and you intend to prosecute the war to the Southward."[1]

General Washington replied to this immediately, in order to remove all doubt upon the subject of New York from La Fayette's mind, that he should not have sent him away, but, on the contrary, should have considered his detachment essential to the undertaking, and should therefore have recalled him, if there had been the most distant prospect of such an operation. But he now directed him definitively to join General Greene. "While I give you credit," he replied to La Fayette's letter of the 8th of April, from the Head of Elk, "for the manœuvre by which you removed the British ships from before Annapolis, I am sorry, as matters are circumstanced, that you have put yourself so much further from the point, which now of necessity becomes the object of your destination. Whether General Phillips remains in Virginia or goes further southward, he must be opposed by a force more substantial than militia alone; and you will for that reason immediately open a communication with General Greene, inform him of the numbers, situation, and probable views of the enemy in Virginia, and take his directions as to marching forward to join him, or remaining there to keep a watch upon the motions of Phillips, should he have formed a junction with Arnold at Portsmouth."[2]

[1] 10th April, 1781, from Elk: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 499.

[2] From New Windsor, 11th April, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 10.

La Fayette's own judgment in this matter had been entirely correct, however, and before this letter of General Washington's was written he had started with his troops southward, without waiting for a reply. He had hastened his footsteps the more because a letter from the Governor of Maryland brought him the intelligence that six ships were coming up the Potomac River: he thought these might be privateers of the enemy, and he decided to give what assistance he could. He had reached Susquehanna Ferry (at Bald Friar, in Harford County, Maryland) and crossed his detachment on the 13th of April. He received there a letter from General Greene, expressing a strong opinion that he would better go southward in order to take part in the war, the seat of which was to be in South Carolina, and directing him to proceed at once to Richmond. The wind was blowing so hard at the ferry that, although he had set his men over, it was impossible to cross with the wagons and provisions, so that he was obliged to remain behind two days longer, until the 15th, anxious meanwhile to fulfil the order which he had received, and yet greatly disturbed by the unsettled condition of his men, whose unwillingness to go to the South was growing daily more pronounced.[1]

Before he crossed the ferry, he wrote upon that subject to General Washington,—

"I cannot obtain any good account of Phillips's motions, nor oppose the schemes he may have formed, until I am much farther advanced; and dissatisfaction and desertion being two greater evils than any other we have to fear, I am anxious to have rivers, other countries, and every kind of barrier to stop the inclination of the men to return home.

"Many men have already deserted; many more will, I am afraid, take the same course. Whatever sense of duty, ties of

[1] For an account of this crossing of the Susquehanna River, see Mr. E. M. Allen's "La Fayette's Second Expedition to Virginia, in 1781:" Publications of the Maryland Historical Society, 1891.

affection, and severity of discipline may operate, shall be employed most earnestly by me, and I wish we might come near the enemy, which is the only means of putting a stop to that spirit of desertion. . . .

"Many articles, and indeed everyone which compose the appearance of a soldier will be wanting for this detachment. But shoes, linen overalls, hunting-shirts, shirts and ammunition will be the necessary supplies for which I request your Excellency's most pressing orders."

And further on in the same letter he reported,—

"While I was writing this, accounts have been brought to me that a great desertion had taken place last night. Nine of the Rhode Island company—and the best men they had, who have made many campaigns and never were suspected; these men say that they like better Hundred lashes than a journey to the Southward. As long as they had an expedition in view, they were very well satisfied. But the idea of remaining in the Southern States appear to them intolerable, and they are amazingly averse to the people and climate. I shall do my best. But if this disposition lasts, I am afraid we will be reduced lower than I dare expect."[1]

This question was, indeed, becoming one of exceeding gravity; for the continuance of disaffection and desertion was threatening the discipline, if not the very existence, of the detachment. When La Fayette had finished the crossing of his baggage-wagons to the western bank of the Susquehanna River, he adopted a plan which was evidently dictated by his own earnest conception of loyalty and duty, and which presented the situation, as he saw it himself, so clearly to the minds of his men, by appealing to their manhood and to their honor as soldiers, that it stopped the desertion instantly.

This was an order of the day, in which he announced to his troops that the detachment was now about to set out upon an expedition in which it would be necessary to

[1] From Susquehanna Ferry, 15th April, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State. Printed, with omissions, under date of the 14th of April, in La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 503.

encounter dangers and difficulties of every kind, and to fight an enemy far superior in numbers; that the general was determined to carry out this purpose, but that he should not force any soldier to accompany him upon the expedition who was inclined to abandon him; nor was it necessary, he declared, for any one to commit the crime and incur the danger of desertion; for, if any soldier wished to go back, he need but apply to the general for a pass, and he should be sent at once to join his regiment in winter quarters.

The effect of this was so complete that not only did no one ask for such a pass, but one of the men, having an injured leg which prevented him from marching, hired a cart to carry him along and to save him from the disgrace of being left behind.[1]

He proceeded to Baltimore, where a ball was given in his honor (during the short time that he halted there to obtain what clothing and shoes he could for his men), and he made the acquaintance of the citizens of the town, who went to the ball in order to compliment the distinguished young general. This occasion afforded an opportunity to the ladies of Baltimore to give a substantial proof of their patriotism, and to La Fayette an incentive to add another act of generosity to the many he had already performed in behalf of the United States of America. His detachment was suffering from the want of clothing, which Congress could not supply, although he had sent an urgent requisition; and he, seeing that there was no likelihood that the men would be able to march, though it was urgently necessary to proceed at once, concluded to furnish himself such things as could be obtained, by employing his own credit in behalf of his soldiers. From the merchants of Baltimore he borrowed, therefore, two

[1] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 268; Letter to General Washington, from Baltimore, 18th April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 403.

thousand guineas upon his personal obligation, with which to buy linen, shoes, overalls, and hats; and the ladies of Baltimore joined together to make up the linen into shirts.

In his report of this incident to Congress, he said,—

"I most respectfully beg leave to submit to Congress a measure which in the present emergency it was necessary to take, and which alone could enable us to follow my instructions and march to the support of the Southern States.

"Having no hope of relief from any public magazine, and being fully convinced that our absolute want of shoes and linen put it out of our power to proceed, I have borrowed from the merchants at Baltimore a sum that (with the addition of a few shoes purchased here) will amount to about two thousand guineas—for this I became security and promised it would be returned with the interests in two years' time, engaging however to make exertions for an earlier payment.[1]

"Should Congress be pleased to leave with me the management of this affair, I will propose that the government of France have this money added to any loan Congress may have procured in that country, and will also endeavour to reduce the debt of Congress to the primitive sum for which these articles have been bought in France.

"This measure, which want of time obliged me to take upon myself, and which I beg Congress will please to excuse, may enable me to furnish every non-commissioned officer and soldier in the detachment with one shirt and one pair of overalls. Some hats and some shoes will also be procured. I am under great obligations to the merchants of Baltimore for their readiness to afford me their succour, and feel myself particularly indebted to the ladies of that town who have been pleased to undertake the making of the shirts for our detachment.

"The several articles mentioned in this letter were of an immediate necessity. But we do greatly want a succour from the Board of War. Our circumstances are peculiar; our cloathing more ragged than usual; the situation of the officers requires a particular and instant consideration. Col Barber having waited on the Board of War with instructions relative to our relief, I

[1] At the end of two years more he would have arrived at the age of twenty-five,—when, under the laws of France, he would have control of his own property.

hope some supplies are by this time on their way. Both officers and soldiers have an indefatigable zeal. But I think it my duty the more warmly to expose their wants, as their fortitude and virtue patiently and chearfully carries them through every kind of hardship." [1]

A remarkable earnestness in all the projects that an active mind could conceive for the benefit of the American people made La Fayette indefatigable in facing difficulties and hardships himself, and in encouraging others to do so; and, just as he never spared his own personal strength where fatigue was to be encountered, so also his generous nature impelled him to risk, and, if need were, to sacrifice, his private fortune.

We have seen him ready to do this in France, in his correspondence with the Comte de Vergennes whilst he was trying to secure the aid of the King's Government for the United States; we see him now rendering this service in America in order that he might lead his soldiers into the field. His solicitude for their welfare endeared him to his men; his courage in the face of obstacles which appeared to be insurmountable inspired them with new strength, and urged them to press forward with enthusiasm where "the Marquis" led them and pointed out the way. And he, surrounded by them, in the midst of a vigorous contest with the enemy, in which his attachment to these men grew closer from the daily contact with dangers which he shared with them, exclaimed to General Washington, "These three battalions are the best troops that ever took the field; my confidence in them is unbounded." [2]

He took them now into Virginia, with regret at leaving

[1] La Fayette to Congress, from Alexandria, 22d April, 1781: Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State; La Fayette to General Washington, from Baltimore, 18th April, 1781: Correspondence of La Fayette, American edition, i. 403. For the ball given at Baltimore, and the address presented to General de La Fayette, see Scharf, Chronicles of Baltimore, p. 194.

[2] 20th July, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 423.

the main army and at separating himself from General Washington, whose presence was the source of happiness for La Fayette in America; but he was obeying the commands of military duty, which all the traditions of his race had taught him to accept with a cheerful acquiescence. Unconsciously, he and his men were turning their faces toward victory and honor; and whilst La Fayette was still longing for an opportunity to go back and take part in the anticipated attack upon New York, in which, as he said, his "heart and every faculty of his mind had been those last years so much concerned,"[1] he was in fact entering upon a campaign in which he was to be crowned with success, and in connection with which his name will ever be joined to the names of Washington and Rochambeau and Greene. This was the campaign in Virginia, a part of that struggle in the South which has been declared by the foremost of the French students of American Revolutionary history at the present day, the distinguished scholar and critic M. Henri Doniol, to be classic, and the history of which he pronounces to be worthy of being taught in the schools to the children of future generations, as an illustration of the grandeur of patriotism, of devotion, and of self-sacrifice.[2]

"When the history of that country shall have become the history of antiquity," says M. Doniol, "the school-children will be taught, as the generations now passing away are taught the memorable events of Greece or of Rome, to repeat the actions that took place in the campaign which began in the South against the English army after the undeserved defeat into which Gates plunged his troops when Lincoln had given up Charleston.

"Rarely have such privation and suffering, such patriotic firmness and courageous determination, been united, in any soldiers, with the same display of intelligent resolution, of native ability,

[1] To General Washington, from Susquehanna Ferry, 15th April, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Etablissement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, iv. 613.

of devotion upon the part of each of the leaders, to win for a feeble little army of liberation the glory of driving back an enemy, well equipped, vigorous, and formidable, with whom it contended for its native land. And this glory belongs entirely to the United States, as does that also of their earlier contests, down to the battle of Monmouth; for, although they had a few officers who had gone over from France, they had no other soldiers than the men of those revolted States."

The daring and perseverance of General Greene had checked, as we have seen, what had appeared to be the irresistible advance of Lord Cornwallis through the Carolinas; but, whilst Greene was carrying the war still farther to the South, the British commander fixed his eye upon Virginia. When Cornwallis started northward from Wilmington, almost at the very moment when La Fayette was leaving Baltimore for the South, the scenes were being prepared for the last act in the drama. For a time the British general and the ardent young Frenchman were to sustain the action, which gave rise to the display of remarkable tact and judgment upon the part of the latter whilst he drew the former along, step by step, into the course which led him to his ruin.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMERICA APPEALS TO FRANCE FOR MORE AID—SAILING OF THE FRENCH FLEET UNDER THE COMTE DE GRASSE.

THE generous conduct of the Marquis de La Fayette in borrowing money from the merchants of Baltimore to clothe the soldiers of the United States when Congress was powerless to help them, was an element of success in the Virginia campaign which deserves to be properly estimated. Without it, his troops could not have performed the service required of them by making an immediate advance; for, aside from their need of suitable garments to be worn in a climate much warmer than that to which they were accustomed, their destitution lay in their lack of the essential article of shoes. That they were provided for by La Fayette enabled them to march with rapidity; and this, we shall see, was of very great importance in the events which followed. La Fayette's zeal was recognized and appreciated, in the army as well as throughout the country. Congress acknowledged it in reply to his letter of the 22d of April, by the following Resolution:[1]

"*Resolved*, That Congress entertain a just sense of the patriotic and timely exertions of the merchants of Baltimore, who so generously supplied the marquis de la Fayette with about two thousand guineas, to enable him to forward the detachment under his command:

"That the marquis de la Fayette be assured that Congress will take proper measures to discharge the engagements he has entered into with the merchants."

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[1] Journals of Congress, 24th May, 1781.

This act was the voluntary expression of La Fayette's confidence in the success of the American cause at one of the darkest moments in the struggle for independence. He assumed a risk against which there was, of course, absolutely no security without the establishment of the republic in the United States, knowing full well when he did so that the case was desperate. Unless effectual and instant aid could be secured from France, the hour of failure had struck; nothing more could be done by the country itself. There was no resource left but in the alliance with France; and anxious hearts awaited in America the result of the appeal to Louis XVI. after the conference at Hartford, and the outcome of the mission of John Laurens. It is, no doubt, true that La Fayette relied upon the assistance which he thought was sure to come from his countrymen at home; but certainly the day was dark, the French troops at Newport were not available in active operations, and the British held the key to the situation in America by retaining their naval superiority. Neither La Fayette nor any one else could have foreseen, at that moment, that the contest was so near its end.

General Washington, whose courage never failed to sustain the hopes of the nation, was forced to admit that circumstances were beyond control at home. He wrote to Colonel Laurens, then on his way to Paris, as the result of his deliberate judgment,—

"If France delays a timely and powerful aid in the critical posture of our affairs, it will avail us nothing, should she attempt it hereafter. We are at this hour suspended in the balance; not from choice, but from hard and absolute necessity; and you may rely on it as a fact, that we cannot transport the provisions from the States in which they are assessed to the army, because we cannot pay the teamsters, who will no longer work for certificates. It is equally certain, that our troops are approaching fast to nakedness, and that we have nothing to clothe them with; that our hospitals are without medicines and our sick without

nutriment except such as well men eat; and that our public works are at a stand, and the artificers disbanding. But why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come." [1]

Happily, relief was coming from France at that very moment,—relief which was to give new vigor to the Continental army that would enable it to continue the struggle; to revive the drooping spirits of the people whom desperation had been staring in the face; to release the French troops from their enforced inactivity at Newport; and, finally, to secure the naval superiority by which the ultimate success of the American Revolution was established.

All this good fortune was being prepared with profound secrecy in the Cabinet at Versailles, and little was known of it in the United States. The news was carefully conveyed in the official correspondence of the French Department of State to the Chevalier de La Luzerne at Philadelphia, and to La Fayette, who had contributed effectively toward this result by his representation to M. de Vergennes upon the state of the country, especially in his letter of the 16th of December, 1780, which we have seen above; and it reached the Comte de Rochambeau in his despatches from the French War Office. But in each case the announcement was accompanied by an injunction of secrecy as to every one but General Washington and a few persons who ought to be informed of what was taking place. In view, however, of the danger that, by some accident or indiscretion, notice of the intended operations might reach the enemy's spies if the plans were confided to a large number of individuals, they were withheld for the moment from an open discussion even in Congress.

[1] To Colonel John Laurens, at Paris, from New Windsor, 9th April, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 5.

The decision arrived at by the French Government was, in substance, to advance large sums of money to the United States with which to furnish clothing and equipment for their army, and to send to their coast, at some favorable moment during the latter part of the summer of 1781, the formidable naval armament which was about to sail from Brest, under command of the Comte de Grasse, for the West Indies. This was not, indeed, what the Comte de Rochambeau had hoped for when he sent his son to France to prefer the request that ten thousand French troops should be added to his command, in order that he might have an army corps with which he could break through the bonds that held him at Newport and might operate effectively against the British at New York in conjunction with the Continental army. It was not in exact compliance, either, with the request for assistance with which to maintain an army of at least thirty thousand men made by Congress after the conference at Hartford; "les immenses demandes du Congrès" which M. de Vergennes declared it would be impossible for the King to accede to without impoverishing himself and injuring his own credit.

The burden of the war was becoming heavy to bear in France, where the drain upon the treasury for the support of the fleet and the detachment at Newport had been very considerable; and this was largely increased by the losses in exchange and by commissions which the Government found itself obliged to pay to intermediaries and agents who could not be dispensed with. The enormous outlay of the previous summer in the preparations for an attack upon England, which had resulted in complete failure, made it harder to supply ready money; and the barrenness of the expedition under M. de Rochambeau, after nearly a whole year spent in waiting, was disheartening as to further advances.

It happened that the application for help came from

America at a most inopportune moment; and, by coming unexpectedly upon the Government, it rendered embarrassing a situation which had already grown difficult. The frigate L'Amazone, which took the Vicomte de Rochambeau to France, arrived in the latter part of November, 1780, and upon the 26th of the month that gentleman presented himself to the Secretary of State, at Versailles, with the requirements which had been agreed upon at the Hartford conference. M. de Vergennes instantly saw the urgency of the case, and at once he determined to send back the vessel with money for the auxiliary troops sufficient to tide over their immediate necessities, whilst in the mean time the Vicomte de Rochambeau should be retained in France until an opportunity could be had to consider the serious questions involved in his mission. The Prince de Montbarrey, Secretary of War, explained this to General de Rochambeau in a letter which went to Newport on the Amazone: "The conclusions arrived at in the conference at Hartford appear to His Majesty to be of too great importance to be hastily disposed of. The King commands me to inform you that he will forward his orders to you when he shall have decided upon the plans for the campaign of 1781. . . . I keep your son here for the present, and I shall send him to you when I am able to announce to you the definite orders of the King."[1] And M. de Vergennes wrote to him at the same time, "I send you this despatch by the frigate L'Amazone which brought the Vicomte de Rochambeau to France. It is ordered back in haste because it carries money for our troops, and in the mean time we have not had an opportunity to examine the plan of campaign proposed at the conference of Hartford; but that subject will be taken into consideration without delay. . . . We desire sincerely to contribute toward the deliverance

[1] M. de Montbarrey to M. de Rochambeau, 9th and 11th December, 1780: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

of America; but the methods proposed seem to me extravagant, and yet ineffectual."[1]

Whilst the Cabinet of Versailles was still dealing with this troublesome question of America, presented by the Vicomte de Rochambeau, and before it had been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion as to the course to be pursued, despatches were received from the Chevalier de La Luzerne, on the 31st of January, 1781, which brought news from Philadelphia up to the 21st of December, and announced the coming of John Laurens as the representative of Congress with a demand for twenty-five millions of livres tournois. This intelligence added greatly to the disquiet with which M. de Vergennes was beginning to view the situation. Whilst he could not escape the conviction that the weight of responsibility must now fall upon France, because she had gone too far into the war to withdraw, and the people of the United States were exhausted by the efforts already made, he pictured to himself, with a certain degree of consternation, the approach of a day when the treasury should be depleted and when the King could no longer hold out the strong hand, if the war continued.

With this contingency in mind, he called upon M. de La Luzerne to warn Congress beforehand.

"If he [the King]," said he, "were to consult only his affection for the United States, he would not hesitate. But this is already the fourth campaign which has been opened for them. The expenses of the last one would be exceeded, and those called for an extraordinary outlay of one hundred and fifty millions! The King is obliged to have recourse to retrenchments and to loans for his own service; he was justified in expecting that the United States would at least provide for the expenses of their army. Our wish to aid them at every point has induced us to advance recently to M. Franklin one million with which to meet the obligations of last year, and four to provide for the estimates

[1] Comte de Vergennes to M. de Rochambeau, 4th December, 1780; Etats-Unis, t. 14, No. 111: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 537.

of this. We wish, therefore, that they had not sent Mr. Laurens to us. His request will be embarrassing, and we shall be grieved to refuse him; but Congress must be notified of this refusal, in order that it may not be taken by surprise." [1]

But almost at the same moment, in Paris, the venerable Dr. Franklin was making an appeal to the Secretary of State which set forth the dire need of his countrymen for immediate help if they were to escape the yoke of British domination for ages to come, in language which was made eloquent by its earnest declaration of our reliance upon France and by the direct simplicity of its patriotic sentiment; it became almost pathetic from his allusion to his own advancing years, which admonished him to hasten his footsteps lest he should not have time to gain the relief he so anxiously sought for the people whom France had befriended thus far, but who were now ready to fall by the wayside.

This letter foreshadowed the coming of Laurens; it corroborated all that had been written by M. de La Luzerne, by Rochambeau, and by La Fayette; and, taken in connection with statements made by these distinguished Frenchmen in America, it had great weight, undoubtedly, with the Cabinet.

"Sir," it said, "I have just received from Congress their letter for the King, which I have the honor of putting herewith into the hands of your Excellency. I am charged, at the same time, to 'represent, in the strongest terms, the unalterable resolution of the United States to maintain their liberties and independence, and inviolably to adhere to the alliance at every hazard and in every event, and that the misfortunes of the last campaign, instead of repressing, have redoubled their ardor; that Congress are resolved to employ every resource in their power to expel the enemy from every part of the United States by the most vigorous and decisive co-operation with marine and other forces of their illustrious ally; that they have accordingly called on the several

[1] M. de Vergennes to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, 19th February, 1781; Etats-Unis, t. 14, No. 32: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 541.

States for a powerful army and ample supplies of provisions; and that the States are disposed effectually to comply with their requisitions. That if, in aid of their own exertions, the Court of France can be prevailed on to assume a naval superiority in the American seas, to furnish the arms, ammunition, and clothing specified in the estimate heretofore transmitted, and to assist with the loan mentioned in the letter, they flatter themselves, that, under the Divine blessing, the war must speedily be terminated with glory and advantage to both nations.' . . .

"The Marquis de la Fayette writes to me that it is impossible to conceive, without seeing it, the distress which the troops have suffered for want of clothing. . . . They had in America great expectations, I know not on what foundation, that a considerable supply of money would be obtained from Spain; but that expectation has failed, . . . so that for effectual friendship, and for the aid so necessary in the present conjuncture, we can rely on France alone and in the continuance of the King's goodness towards us.

"I am grown old. I feel myself much enfeebled by my late long illness, and it is probable I shall not long have any more concern in these affairs. I therefore take this occasion to express my opinion to your Excellency that the present conjuncture is critical; that there is some danger lest the Congress should lose its influence over the people if it is found unable to procure the aids that are wanted, and that the whole system of the new government in America may thereby be shaken. That if the English are suffered once to recover that country, such an opportunity of effectual separation as the present may not occur again in the course of ages; and that the possession of those fertile and extensive regions and that vast sea-coast will afford them so broad a basis for future greatness, by the rapid growth of their commerce and breed of seamen and soldiers, as will enable them to become the *terror of Europe*, and to exercise with impunity that insolence which is so natural to their nation, and which will increase enormously with the increase of their power."[1]

It was the 1st of March, 1781, before the plans of the Cabinet of Versailles were definitively fixed upon. Much negotiation had taken place in the diplomatic correspondence between Paris and Madrid in regard to the carrying

[1] B. Franklin to the Comte de Vergennes, Passy, 13th February, 1781: Diplomatic Correspondence, Wharton, iv. 254.

on of hostilities; and delays had arisen from the length of time consumed in transmitting the despatches, as well as from the procrastination which had always been encountered by the Foreign Office in its relations with Spain. It was the purpose of the two kingdoms now to operate together for their mutual interests in the West Indies, whither the fleet of Admiral de Grasse was intended to sail forthwith under the agreement that he was to consult with the Spanish authorities there immediately upon his arrival, and to act in concert with them. There were forty-seven French vessels of war in the harbor of Brest, of which twenty were intended for the West Indies and six were ordered to be sent, at the request of the King of Spain, to Cadiz, to help strengthen the Spanish armament there, probably with a view to Gibraltar; the remainder of them were retained in Brest, to defend the Channel, and perhaps to form the escort for an attack upon Great Britain in force, the idea of which had not at that time been abandoned.

This satisfactory arrangement having been arrived at with Spain, the French Cabinet was better prepared to decide the question as to the approaching campaign in America. M. de Vergennes was opposed to sending more troops to the United States, largely because of the difficulties which inevitably attended such an expedition and the vast outlay of money that must be incurred in connection with it, but also because he reasoned that, if ten thousand French soldiers were sent to America, Great Britain would increase her forces there at once to the same degree, so that the relative position of the armies would not have changed in fact, although the expenses would be very greatly increased; and this was what he meant when he said to General de Rochambeau that the Hartford plan was "extravagant and yet ineffectual."

But his chief objection to that kind of aid lay in his fear that, if France continued to send her troops to

America, the United States would relax their own efforts to raise men, and would gradually throw upon France the burden of the war; an idea which had lately taken possession of his thoughts, and which had been strengthened by the news received from Newport and Philadelphia of the revolt among the troops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. With this in mind, M. de Vergennes, who was then, even more than he had been during the first years of King Louis's reign, the dominant spirit of the ministry, through whom the orders of all the departments appear to have been promulgated and into whose hands the documents of all branches of the administration came for discussion, decided to return the Vicomte de Rochambeau to Newport without the reinforcement asked for by his father the general; without even the second division of the expedition, long eagerly expected by the French commanders, which it was definitively decided now should not leave France.

Here was a sad disappointment to the Comte de Rochambeau, whose experience in America, up to that time, had been a continued series of ineffectual efforts to overcome obstacles greater than his strength, and whose constancy was now to be put again to the test. But the Secretary of State was far from abandoning the cause of the United States, though he declined to accede to the demands of the Hartford conference precisely as they were formulated. The circumstances which governed his actions obliged him, very naturally, to consider first the requirements of France herself, to provide against possible European complications which it was feared might arise in consequence of the recent death of the Empress Maria Theresa, an event which for the moment created great uneasiness in France; and he had to sustain the credit and husband the financial resources of his own Government. With all this in view, however, he continued to exert his powerful influence in our behalf

to organize a system of relief by which the distress in America was overcome, the troops of Rochambeau were made effective in the operations of General Washington, the campaign of Greene in the Carolinas and that of La Fayette in Virginia were prosecuted, and it was made possible to maintain the struggle for liberty to the point, then not far away, of final success. The Comte de Vergennes, from his Cabinet in Versailles, contributed, in an eminent degree, toward the establishment of the United States of America; and his service entitles him to a place in the grateful memory of its people.

After he had arrived at his decision in regard to the policy of the Government, he wrote to La Fayette, in reply to his letter,[1]—

"VERSAILLES, the 10th of March, 1781.

"I have received, Sir, the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 16th of the month of December last. I have delayed answering it because the subjects contained in it called for deliberation which various circumstances have obliged us to postpone. The King has just come to a decision in regard to the assistance of every kind to be given to the Americans in the approaching campaign. I do not present it to you here in detail, because I am transmitting it to M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne and I have no doubt that minister will communicate it to you. I have reason to believe that M. Washington will be contented with the efforts we are making to sustain the American cause, and that he will do, upon his part, everything within his power to prevent them from being ineffectual. I beg you to assure that general that we place entire confidence in his zeal, his patriotism, and his talents, and that it will give us the greatest pleasure to see him attain at last the glory of having freed his country, and of having assured its liberty.

"I trust that the uneasiness which has manifested itself in the American army has been entirely composed; for a renewal of scenes like those among the Pennsylvanians would be very dangerous and would probably defeat the most vigorous and best concerted plans. Clothing is now being shipped to you for your

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 15, No. 92: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 550.

troops, and more will follow, I hope: this matter appears to me to be the most important, as well as the most urgent."

Upon the same day, M. de Vergennes sent for Dr. Franklin, to whom he announced that the King had advanced to the United States six millions of livres tournois; and he discussed with him the immediate expenditure of such part of that money as might be required to meet the most pressing needs.

The despatch of M. de Vergennes to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, to which he had referred La Fayette for detailed information as to the policy of the Crown, was written the day before; that is to say, upon the 9th of March.[1] Beginning with the request of the Comte de Rochambeau that France should send out ten thousand additional troops, with large quantities of munitions of war and artillery, the minister said,—

"The subject has been thoroughly examined and discussed in the King's Council, and it was decided that, even if the detachment of this corps of troops asked for by the French general were proved to be as serviceable as it appears to be dangerous when we consider the jealousy of which an infant nation is susceptible, which sees dangers everywhere threatening its liberty, it was decided, I say, that this expedition would exceed the capacity both of our navy and of our finances, without any well-defined benefit. For New York cannot be taken with thirty thousand men if it is defended by fifteen thousand, as we are told it is.

"It was considered, in the first place, that if we complied with the request of M. le Comte de Rochambeau we should have to abandon our purpose of sending out to our Islands the assistance, in the form of troops, of munitions of war, and of provisions, of which they are in the most pressing need, because it would take not less than the whole fleet now employed in guarding the two Americas to assure the passage of so important a convoy. And, in the second place, that if we should transport a reinforcement of ten thousand men to the American continent, the English would shortly send an equal number; which would make that country the real theatre of the war, without hastening the

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 15, No. 89: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 584.

end, and would but add infinitely to its exhaustion and to the sum of its calamities, which is already only too great.

"It was noted also that in all the demands which have been made through you, or which Congress has made of us through its own minister, there has never been a reference of any kind to the sending of reinforcements of troops; we have been asked only for money and for ships. Considering all this, sir, it was decided that we could not properly agree to the plan of the Comte de Rochambeau, even if we were in a situation to carry it out. The King has therefore concluded not only to refuse this request, but to abandon the expedition of the second division of troops, which was to have been sent out last year, but which has been detained in one of our ports by the presence of an English squadron superior to our own. He is convinced, sir, that, the more troops we have in North America, the more difficult it will be to maintain them, and the less useful they will be, and the less able to render effective service. But, at the same time, since His Majesty has no intention of employing for his own benefit a succor which he had promised to his allies, he reserves the right to recompense them in a manner worthy of his greatness, as I shall explain to you later.

"In consequence, therefore, of what has just been said, the Minister of War has informed M. le Comte de Rochambeau of this decision, and he has instructed him that it is the intention of the King that he shall consider himself and his troops as purely auxiliary, and entirely subject to the orders of the American commanding general; and that he shall join him whenever that officer shall ask him to do so, with so much of his force, at least, as he can take without exposing the squadron at Newport."

Turning then to the effective assistance which the King intended to give to the United States by sending his fleet from the West Indies, a part of the plan which was of enormous importance, because by it the naval superiority in our waters would be thrown upon the American side of the contest, and which subsequently proved of almost inestimable value in the Yorktown campaign, M. de Vergennes continued his despatch:

"M. le Comte de Grasse, who commands our fleet in the Antilles, has been ordered to conduct, sometime toward the approach of next winter, a part of his fleet to the coast of North

America, or to detach a portion of it to sweep the coast and to co-operate in any undertaking which may be projected by the French and American generals, or to form a part of it if they are unable to co-operate. The number of ships to be sent to the North will depend upon the need which the Spaniards have of our assistance, and can be determined only when M. de Grasse shall have reached Santo Domingo, after having distributed the supplies to the Antilles, and after he shall have conferred with the Spanish commanders as to their projects. If they have made preparations for some great enterprise, we shall have to lend them a hand; for if a serious blow is struck at the common enemy, and it is successful, the advantage will be equally great for all the allies. The important point is to weaken the enemy, to crush him if possible; the locality is a matter of little consequence.

"But," said he, in referring to the great danger which would be sure to follow the exposure of this plan to the enemy, "it will be necessary that the intention of the King to send to the North a part of his fleet in the Antilles, and the time at which it will proceed thither, shall remain veiled in the most profound secrecy. The chief advantage to be hoped for will be to surprise Admiral Arbuthnot, to attack him before he can be reinforced by Rodney, and to release the squadron which is blockaded at Newport. . . . There is so little secrecy in Congress that we shall be obliged to conceal from it the secrets of the plans by which we intend to benefit its cause, if we wish to prevent the English from discovering our purposes and defeating them. . . . You will understand, sir, how far you may disclose this subject to General Washington. He is said to be very discreet and exceedingly reserved; but whether he will be able to be reserved in his relations with Congress is a question which you must decide from your own experience.

"I come now," he continued, "to the letter which Congress has written to the King to present to him its immense requests [*pour lui exposer ses immenses demandes*]. His Majesty is touched as well by the sentiments of attachment which it expresses as by the embarrassing situation which it discloses. He is impelled to relieve the latter, so far as it is within his power; but good wishes have their limits, and there is no human faculty which is not circumscribed. The present war costs us now more than one hundred and fifty millions of extraordinary expenses annually. It is only by contracting loans that we have succeeded in meeting these; but if we exceed our ability in this direction we shall fall into discredit and all our resources will fail us. Congress asks

the King to lend it twenty-five millions, that is to say, that His Majesty shall guarantee a loan to that amount; but if the King were to accede to this request the effect would not be what is hoped; because Congress cannot expect to borrow upon the same terms as the King, and if His Majesty should assume this loan upon his own account he would exceed the aggregate of funds available for this sort of transactions, and the result would be an advance in the rates of money.

"The moment this urgent necessity and this great lack of money became known, confidence would be destroyed in regard to the loans of the King as well as to those for the Americans, our credit would fall, and we should be without resources both for our own needs and for those of our ally. All these difficulties having been duly considered and thoroughly discussed in several committees, it was the unanimous opinion that the loan asked for by the Americans should not be authorized in France. But His Majesty, wishing to give them a new proof of the active and sincere interest which he feels in their situation and in their cause, has determined, in spite of the stress of circumstances and of the great efforts which he is making in every direction, principally for them, to advance them, in the form of a gratuitous subsidy, the sum of six millions of livres tournois.

"I have been directed to see M. Francklin to announce to him this gift of the King, and to arrange with him for the expenditure of it. I shall request him to give me a statement of all the requisitions which have been made to him for clothing, for arms, and for equipment of the American army," and, after having provided these articles, "their cost having been deducted, the remainder of the six millions will be held at the order of General Washington, or of any other person authorized to receive it. . . .

"The King has a right to expect the gratitude of the United States for so magnanimous an effort, especially as an addition to what he has already done for them. In order to give you a comprehensive idea of this, I shall go no further back than the year 1780. I secured by my credit in the course of that year, for M. Francklin, a loan of three millions tournois. In the month of December he found it necessary to have a million with which to meet some unexpected drafts drawn upon him by Congress; and he received it. I also secured for his use during that year, and always in the form of a loan for which he was not called upon to pay interest to the lenders, four millions of livres. Total, eight millions which America has borrowed under our guarantee. Add to that six millions tournois which the King has given them purely

as a gratuity, and it follows that Congress has received from us in the space of two years fourteen millions."

This point had been reached in the negotiations between Congress and the King's Cabinet, and to this extent the solicitations of the United States for aid had been answered, when Colonel John Laurens arrived in France upon his special mission to the Government. Having put to sea from Boston harbor, in the frigate Alliance, on the 13th of February, Laurens reached L'Orient on the 9th of March, and proceeded thence to Paris, where we find him on the 19th of that month. He was equipped with the original letter of General Washington, upon the state of the country, written to him from New Windsor on the 15th of January,[1] and he had the despatches from the Chevalier de La Luzerne to the Secretary of State, as well as a letter to that gentleman from La Fayette. His ardent presentation of the needs of America, and his youthful enthusiasm, betrayed him into indiscretions, no doubt, and caused him to disregard the established forms of diplomatic procedure; but his mission had the effect, at least, of confirming M. de Vergennes in his belief that, notwithstanding all the aid which France had given to America in the struggle, she had not yet done enough, and that another effort must be made. The presence of Laurens doubtless stimulated the activity of the Cabinet in this direction; for the Secretary of State was engaged in the month of April, only a few weeks later than the date of his despatch to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, quoted above, in negotiating in Holland a further loan of ten millions of livres which was to be made to the United States and guaranteed by the King of France; and he was ultimately led, by his comprehension of affairs in America, possibly by the incessant declarations of Laurens,—although these were exceedingly

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, vii. 368.

embarrassing to him and at times offensive,—to assume this loan directly, upon the refusal of the Dutch to deal with the United States.[1]

[1] Comte de Vergennes to M. de La Luzerne, 11th May, 1781; Etats-Unis, t. 16, No. 71: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 559.

In his despatch to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, dated the 11th of May, M. de Vergennes said of Laurens,—

"I believe, sir, that it will not be necessary for me to comment upon the beneficent and generous actions of His Majesty, and that it will suffice to explain these to the Americans in order that they may be filled with gratitude, if they are capable of that sentiment, and that they may exert every effort in their power to second those of His Majesty in behalf of their cause. We flatter ourselves especially that Congress will not only not share, but will severely condemn, the dissatisfaction expressed by M. Laurens, and that it will endeavor to influence that officer, who is imperfectly acquainted with our customs and with the consideration due to the ministers of a great Power. He has presented several demands not only with an importunate insistence, but even with threats. He demanded that the King should furnish to the Americans arms, clothing, and munitions to an amount exceeding eight millions of livres, and that he should lend them, or at least obtain for them, twenty-five millions more. I did all that I could to persuade M. Laurens that it was impossible for us to satisfy these demands, and that the sums already advanced, added to the loan of ten millions, ought fully to satisfy Congress; but all my efforts were in vain. M. Laurens has greatly neglected me since I informed him of the decision of the King, and I know that he has made the most indiscreet complaints because he was unable to obtain everything that he asked.

"I send you these details, sir, in order that you may be prepared to inform Congress and to prevent it from taking M. Laurens's view. At the same time, since I have no intention of injuring M. Laurens, I beg you to use with great discretion all the information that I have given you upon this subject. The main point is to prevent Congress from being ungrateful through not comprehending the full extent of His Majesty's goodness. It will be for M. Washington to teach a lesson to his aide-de-camp, and it is with that object in view that I have mentioned his conduct to M. le Marquis de La Fayette."

Mr. Jared Sparks, in a note to his Writings of Washington, viii. 527, says, "The zeal of Colonel Laurens, and the ardor of his character, induced him to press his demands with more pertinacity, and with less regard to forms, than is usual in diplomatic intercourse. M. de la Luzerne conversed with him on the subject after his return to America. 'He appeared,' said that minister, 'to be sensible of his mistake, and said he was a soldier, little acquainted with the usages of courts, but warmly attached to his country; and that this sentiment may have led him beyond the bounds, which he ought to have prescribed to himself. He has suffered none of the complaints to escape him here in which he indulged in Paris.' MS. letter from M. de La Luzerne to the Comte de Vergennes, September 25th, 1781."

See also, for the documents relating to Colonel Laurens's mission, Diplomatic Correspondence, Anno 1781; and there is a document in the French

The evidence of this is in the despatch of the Comte de Vergennes to M. de La Luzerne of the 19th of April,[1] in which, after referring to a former statement made by him to the minister in Philadelphia as to the attitude of France, he said, "I have already informed you, sir, in my despatch No. 13, of the King's decision in regard to the pecuniary demands of Congress. The extreme distress of the American army, as you have described it to us, added to the lack of money and of credit, and, above all, to the spirit of insurrection which has shown itself among the troops, had led us to reconsider this subject at the moment when M. Laurens landed in France, and His Majesty has crowned his generosity and magnificence by consenting to become guarantor of a loan of ten millions of livres tournois to be opened in Holland on account of the United States." We find him recurring to this subject in his despatch to M. de La Luzerne of the 11th of May, as follows: "As to the loan, M. le duc de Vauguyon was instructed to propose it to the States of Holland; but he has encountered insurmountable difficulties, not only because the Americans are without credit in Holland, but also because the province of Holland is afraid of compromising itself by lending money to the United States. By so doing it would recognize indirectly their independence, and such a step would be contrary to certain obligations which the Republic has entered into with the neutral Powers. In order to overcome this obstacle, the King has decided to present himself as the principal borrower, and to become alone responsible for the sums of money that shall be advanced. We are now awaiting the result of that proposition."

Thus were the means procured by which the crisis in

Archives prepared by him (Etats-Unis, t. 16, No. 53), entitled "Représentations sur l'insuffisance des secours donnés par la France aux Etats-Unis et sur la nécessité d'en donner de plus abondants," Paris, 18 Avril, 1781.

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 16, No. 54: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 588.

America was finally overcome and the War of Independence carried on to its close. In the mean time, the naval armament, which was to be so important a factor in the events that followed, was completed and sent to its destination in the West Indies, whence, at the proper moment, it was to bear down with all possible force upon the British army and navy in North America.

The Comte de Grasse put to sea from the port of Brest on the 22d of March, with twenty-six vessels, of which six were detached to the Cape of Good Hope when the fleet was off the Azores. On the 5th of April another ship of the line, the Sagittaire, parted from the admiral and turned its course toward Newport, with money for the French troops there, and a reinforcement of about six hundred men for the auxiliary expedition.

Still another vessel, the frigate La Concorde, headed for Newport after the seventh day out, bearing the Vicomte de Rochambeau upon his return from his mission, and the Comte de Barras,[1] who had been the senior captain under the command of M. d'Estaing during his expedition to the United States, and who was now ordered to Newport to take command of the squadron in the place of the Chevalier de Ternay. He carried a letter from the Secretary of the Navy, M. de Castries, to General de Rochambeau, informing him that he should be notified by the Comte de Grasse of the time when that officer should go into the American waters. "He has twenty ships, he will find ten at the Islands, and you have eight more to give him. So that, as he is master of his own movements, with authority to unite or to separate his forces, I trust he may control the American coasts for some time to come, and that he may co-operate with you if you are projecting any enterprise in the North."[2]

On the 6th of May the Concorde arrived at Boston,

[1] "Bon et excellent marin," according to M. de Vergennes.

[2] 21st March, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau.

and on the 8th the Comte de Rochambeau learned that his son had returned to America with Admiral de Barras. He wrote immediately to General Washington to announce this news, and to ask for a conference with the Commander-in-Chief, which seemed to him likely to become necessary in order to concert the plans of co-operation in the campaign. He had no doubt that active operations would soon be resumed, in view of the arrival of reinforcements and supplies which the Vicomte de Rochambeau was certain to announce, and he added with reference to M. de Barras, "He is a man of great reputation, some sixty years of age, and an intimate friend of M. le Comte d'Estaing, whose advance guard he commanded at the time when he forced an entrance into this harbor."[1]

A few days later (on the 13th) the French general repeated his request for an interview, this time with the knowledge that the succors he had asked for from home were not coming, and that he was not to receive a single regiment in addition to the troops he already had. He sought the interview now for the purpose of arranging to carry out the orders of the King by which he was directed to consider himself merely as an auxiliary and to put himself with his troops under the command of General Washington.

It seemed to Rochambeau at that moment as if little could be expected from the result of his efforts whilst circumstances were still unchanged from what they had been the year before, when the expedition had failed entirely of its purpose. No doubt he was willing to co-operate earnestly with General Washington, for whom he had the highest regard, and he did not delay in expressing that intention. But his hopes were destroyed by this unexpected refusal from France.

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[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

Nevertheless, with unfaltering courage in submitting to the commands of his sovereign even in a situation where he could see no light ahead, this hardy old soldier said in the midst of his disappointment, in reply to the despatch of the Secretary of War, "My son has returned to this country quite alone, indeed, but, whatever may happen, the King must be served in the manner which he directs, and I shall begin this second campaign with all the zeal, I venture to say with all the passion, with which I am actuated toward the King's person and in his service, by employing to the best of my ability the very small means which he has left to my control." [1]

[1] To M. de Ségur, 13th May, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER XXV.

LA FAYETTE TAKES COMMAND OF THE CONTINENTAL FORCES IN VIRGINIA—DEFENCE OF RICHMOND.

HAVING concluded his preparations at Baltimore, La Fayette hastened to set out for the South, in order that he might enter Virginia as quickly as possible to defend that State, as well as to defeat the plans of conquest which might have been prepared by Arnold and General Phillips with their united forces at Portsmouth. He was convinced that their object would be to move up along the James River, to capture the magazines, and to destroy the material resources of the State upon which the Americans must rely in the development of the campaign, and that if this object were attained the patriot forces in Virginia would have received a blow in a most vulnerable spot. He decided, therefore, to press on with all speed to Richmond, in the hope that he might arrive there before the approach of the enemy.

A letter which he received at Baltimore from Baron Steuben, dated at Chesterfield Court-House the 10th of April, informed him that it was reported that General Phillips had from fifteen hundred to two thousand men, in addition to the force under Arnold; by which he judged that, proper allowance being made for exaggerations, Phillips's whole army amounted to two thousand eight hundred men; "which obliges me," said La Fayette, "to hasten my march to Fredericksburg and Richmond, where I expect to receive orders from General Greene. The importance of celerity, the desire of lengthening the way home, and immense delays that would stop me for an age, have determined me to leave our tents, artillery, &c.,

under a guard, and with orders to follow as fast as possible, while the rest of the detachment, by forced marches, and with impressed wagons and horses, will hasten to Fredericksburg or Richmond, and by this derange the calculations of the enemy. We set off to-morrow, and this rapid mode of travelling, added to my other precautions, will, I hope, keep up our spirits and good humour." [1]

This was, in an active sense, the beginning of the Virginia campaign.

Having set out from Baltimore on the 19th of April, with his troops equipped as lightly as possible for rapid marching, La Fayette was at Alexandria on the 21st, whence he wrote to General Washington that, "with the help of some wagons and horses, we got, in two days, from the camp, near Baltimore, to this place. We halted yesterday, and having made a small bargain for a few pairs of shoes, are now marching to Fredericksburg. No official account from Phillips, but I am told they are removing stores from Richmond and Petersburg. . . . Our men are in high spirits. Their honour having been interested in this affair, they have made a point to come with us; and murmurs, as well as desertion, are entirely out of fashion." [2]

On the 25th he had reached Fredericksburg, where he had further news from Baron Steuben, with whom he now began to concert the operations to be carried out against the enemy's advance.[3] He said to him,—

"Your favor of the 21st came this morning to hand and I have since received a letter from Governor Jefferson dated last night, wherein he informs me that the enemy had landed near Peters-

[1] To General Washington, from Baltimore, 18th April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 404.

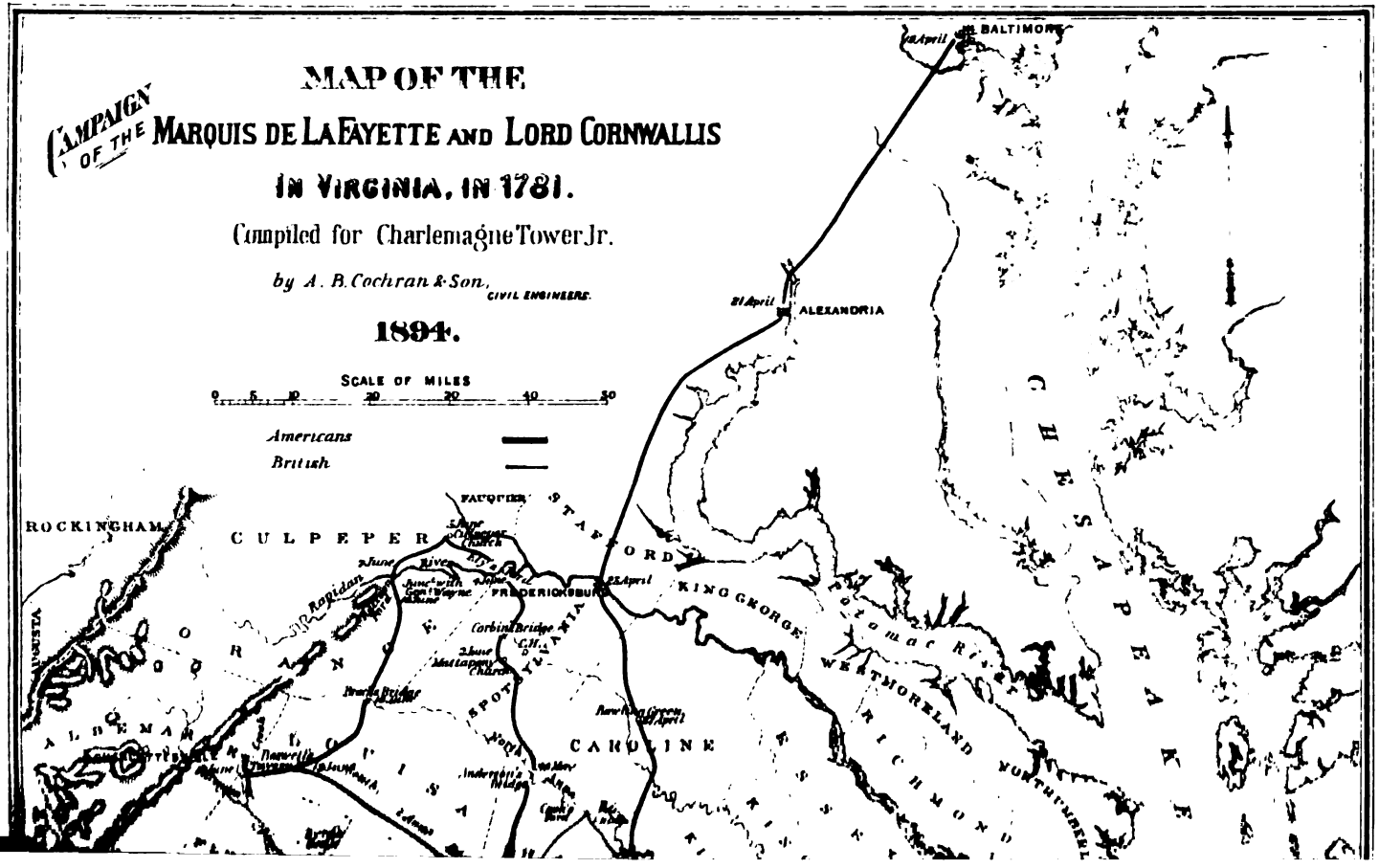
[2] 23d April, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 406.

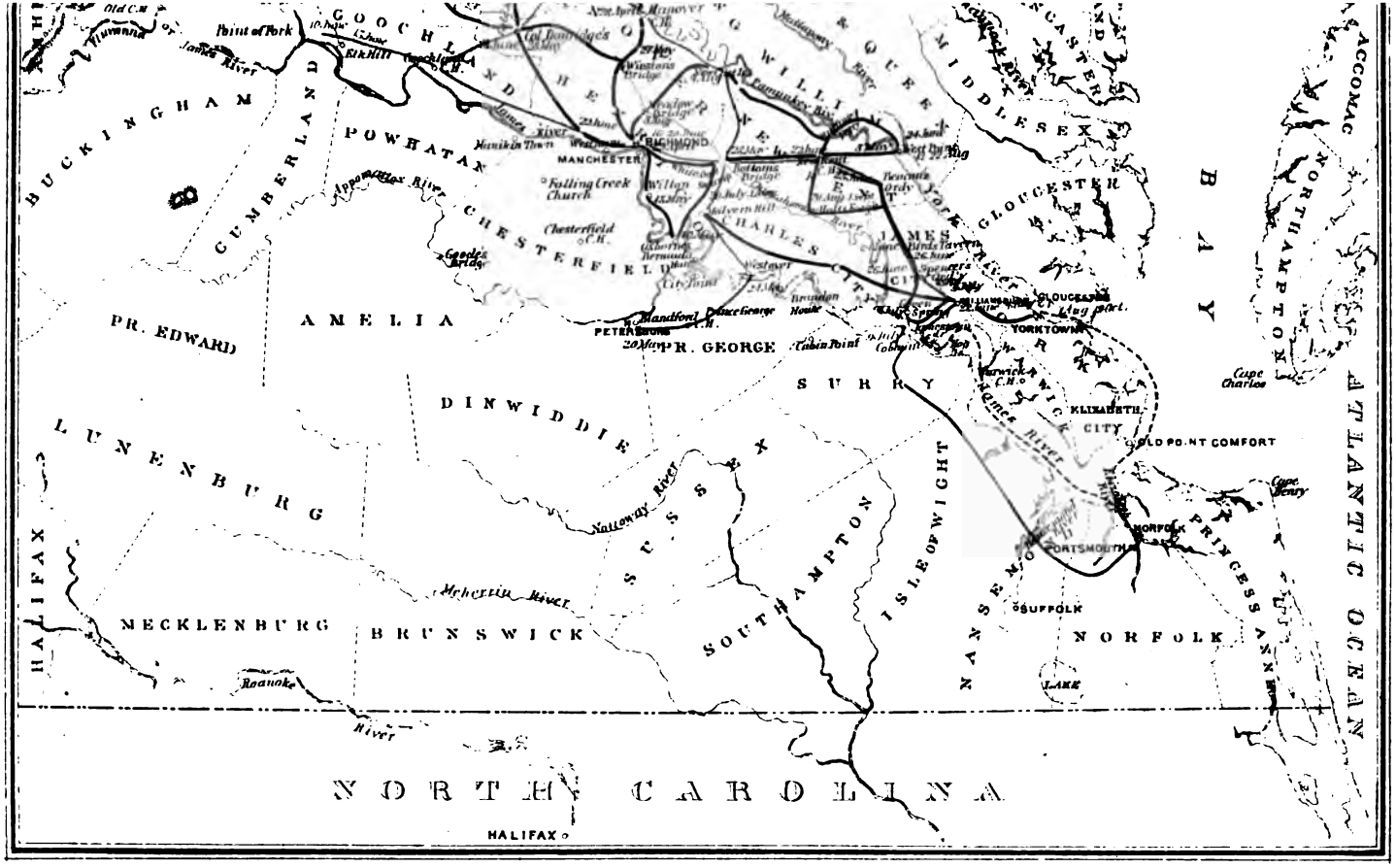
[3] From Fredericksburg, 25th April, 1781: Sparks Papers, Harvard College Library.

burg and were advancing to that place. What opposition you have been able to make I expect to hear by the first express, but hope that before long we may be in a situation to make a substantial resistance. The Continental Detachment is advancing with as much rapidity as the resources of the country and the circumstances of a part of the inhabitants can permit. The enemy being about Petersburg and being said to intend a visit to Richmond, the detachment will advance towards that place until intelligences from you enable me to more certainly determine its movements. I shall myself precede the detachment to Richmond where I hope to hear from you, and request you will send me your opinion upon the practicability of our forming a junction and my crossing James River in case circumstances require this movement. It is important to keep a communication opened as low down as we can support it, and intelligence from you relative to the situation of the country, the crossing of the rivers, and the numbers and intentions of the enemy will be extremely agreeable. I do not think your militia alone can with hope of success be farther engaged than in retarding the motions of the enemy, but you will better judge upon local circumstances, and I will content myself with the notice I give of the approach of our detachment. Its composition is excellent, and on their arrival in conjunction with the militia I think we can make a good opposition provided rivers are not too much in our way. The greater number of cavalry and riflemen we can have, the better it will be. In case we are to act on each side of the river, the side that is likely to be attacked should be supported by whatever horse or riflemen could be thrown over from the other shore. Adieu, my dear Baron. I am happy once more to be destined to co-operate with you. Your advices shall ever be welcome, and your aid shall ever be esteemed. Be pleased to write me a minutest account of matters."

Two days later, he had advanced to Bowling Green, where he received news from Baron Steuben, which the latter had sent him by Captain North; and he wrote to Steuben, on the 27th of April, from Bowling Green Tavern,[1] with his mind made up that Richmond was the important point to occupy, and that he should press on thither with all speed:

[1] Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.


MAP OF THE
CAMPAIGN OF THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE AND LORD CORNWALLIS
IN VIRGINIA, IN 1781.
Compiled for Charlemagne Tower Jr.
by A. B. Cochran & Son, CIVIL ENGINEERS.
1894.
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
Americans
British
BALTIMORE
ALEXANDRIA
FREDERICKSBURG
ROCKINGHAM
CULPEPER
STAFFORD
KING GEORGE
CAROLINE
RICHMOND
WESTMORELAND
CHESAPEAKE


Old C.H
Williamsburg
Point of York
James River
GOOCHLAND
C.H.
BUCKINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
POWHATAN
MANCHESTER
RICHMOND
Falling Creek Church
Chesterfield C.H.
George's Bridge
CHESTERFIELD
CHARLES CITY
JAMES CITY
GLOUCESTER
YORK RIVER
MIDDLESEX
ACCOMAC
NORTHAMPTON
BAY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PR. EDWARD
AMELIA
Mandford
PETERSBURG
PR. GEORGE
Cabin Point
SURRY
YORKTOWN
Cape Charles
DINWIDDIE
LUNENBURG
Nottoway River
SUSSEX
ELIZABETH CITY
OLD POINT COMFORT
Cape Henry
PORTSMOUTH
NORFOLK
HALIFAX
Meherrin River
SOUTHAMPTON
ISLE OF WIGHT
NANSEMOND
PRINCESS ANNE
SUFFOLK
NORFOLK
MECKLENBURG
BRUNSWICK
Roanoke River
LAKE
NORTH CAROLINA
HALIFAX

"DEAR BARON,—I had last evening the pleasure of meeting Captain North and am much obliged to you for the intelligences which you have sent. He will tell you every circumstance relating to our Continental detachment which may be of use, and, as I am on my way to Richmond, I will be able before long to write you from that place.

"I feel for you, my dear Sir, and easily imagine that with your inferiority you cannot make such a resistance as you would wish. From what Captain North says, I am inclined to believe that by this time you are at Chesterfield Court House.

"Richmond must be now the object for both parties. Your point of retreat at the Court House is the more judicious as it enables us to form a junction. As long as we can keep the ferry at Richmond we might cross at that place. But the falls being a natural protection to our boats, I think every boat that can be collected in the river ought to rendezvous at the lowest crossing place above the falls.

"The position of the shipping appears to be the best that can be taken in their critical circumstances. Could not some heavy cannon be put upon the river as floating batteries? I will examine this at Richmond, and wish you to let me know what probability you think we have on this matter.

"The detachment will be at Richmond or Westham the day after to-morrow if the rain don't prevent it. Its artillery and every other apparatus is far behind. As soon as I arrive in Richmond I will write to you more particularly. But, as far as I may judge for the present (taking it for granted that you are now at the Court House) the point above the falls must be considered by us as the most proper to cross the river, and I heartily wish you may not be dislodged from the Court House before the detachment arrives. In case you find it is necessary to retreat up the river bank I wish the boats may get up in the same time, as I understand they cannot be replaced."

On the same day he wrote to Governor Jefferson,[1] informing him that he had met Captain North "from Baron de Steuben's Camp," and adding, "This evening or to-morrow morning I hope to be with your Excellency, and beg leave to request you will honor me with a letter that

[1] 27th April, 1781, from Bowling Green Tavern: Lossing Collection of MSS.

will meet me on the road and let me know how matters are." Upon the following day he was at Hanover Court-House,[1] whence, urged by the threatening advance of the enemy, who were now known to him to be approaching along the James River, La Fayette pressed forward and entered Richmond with his detachment on the 29th of April, in time to save the city from capture, and, what was of paramount importance in that campaign, to secure and protect the large quantities of supplies of various kinds which had been concentrated there.

The enemy, under Benedict Arnold, having been engaged in the mean time in intrenching themselves and fortifying their position at Portsmouth, in anticipation of the expected attack by the forces of the Americans combined with the fleet of the Chevalier Des Touches, had been joined, on the 26th of March, by the reinforcement sent from New York under Major-General Phillips, which consisted of about two thousand British troops. General Phillips was the superior officer in rank, and therefore immediately assumed command of the whole of the enemy's force in Virginia. After he had examined the post at Portsmouth he was of opinion that it could not be rendered secure, and that it was too extensive to be defended by the number of men who could be spared for that purpose during the campaign. Nevertheless, as a great amount of labor had been expended upon the works, and they were approaching completion, he decided to employ his troops upon them until they should be finished. This occupied him until the middle of April; after which he was free to carry out a plan which he had matured, for an incursion into the interior of the State of Virginia, with the object of destroying whatever supplies and provisions for the American army he could find upon the south side of the James River.

[1] Letter to the President of Congress, from Hanover Court-House, 28th April, 1781: Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State.

This plan he carried out with extreme severity; and one of the British historians confesses that "If Virginia had been hitherto favoured, it seems to have been determined at this time to inflict upon it a more than common portion of vengeance. And, so vulnerable is that province, by the joint operation of a land and naval force, that the British troops committed the greatest devastations without any serious opposition, or sustaining any loss." [1]

Having left a sufficient garrison at Portsmouth, General Phillips embarked his troops on the 18th of April, the day before La Fayette set out upon his march from Baltimore, and dropped down to Hampton Roads, whence he directed the expedition to proceed up the James River. His first attack upon the American force was designed against the town of Williamsburg, in order to break up the position held there by a detachment of the Virginia militia, and thence to advance upon Richmond. General Phillips made a landing, therefore, at Burwell's Ferry, on the 19th, without opposition from the militia, who were too weak to resist him. He took possession of Williamsburg and Yorktown, after which he marched to Barret's Ferry, near the Chickahominy, where he re-embarked immediately and continued up the river James, to remove all obstructions to navigation and to seize the arms said to be stored at Prince George Court-House. He proceeded to City Point, where he again disembarked his troops, on the 24th of April; and on the 25th he continued along the south bank of the Appomattox River, toward Petersburg.[2]

At the village of Blandford, about two miles east of Petersburg, he encountered the militia of General Muhlenberg, who were drawn up there under the orders of Baron Steuben, and who offered battle. Phillips attacked

[1] Stedman, History of the American War, ii. 383.
[2] Simcoe's Military Journal, p. 195.

them in the afternoon of the 25th of April, and drove them back after a spirited contest in which General Muhlenberg greatly distinguished himself, and in which the Americans fought under the disadvantage of very great inferiority of force.[1] The stores which had at first been removed to Prince George Court-House for security, and which, as we have seen, were among the objects of General Phillips's expedition, had been found to be unsafe at that point, and had been removed by orders of Baron Steuben farther into the country. Therefore the British, after having taken possession of Petersburg, where they destroyed the tobacco-warehouses and captured a considerable amount of shipping in the Appomattox River, proceeded to Chesterfield Court-House, where they destroyed large quantities of supplies, and to Warwick, where Arnold set fire to all the tobacco-warehouses.

Their main object now, however, was to capture Richmond, as well on account of its importance as the capital of Virginia, as because of the great mass of stores collected in the magazines at that city, and in order to secure it as a base of military operations during the development of the campaign. Baron Steuben's force was not sufficiently strong to protect the city; it was not able to face the enemy in a general attack. He was forced, therefore, to abandon his hold upon Petersburg and to retreat to Chesterfield Court-House, ten miles to the northwest, and afterward to Falling Creek Church; although he reported to General Greene that the troops "disputed the ground with the enemy inch by inch, and the manœuvres were executed with the greatest exactness."[2] The key to the situation was the timely arrival of La Fayette, whom the American generals were anxiously expecting, and who was known to be advancing upon Richmond with all the speed that the transportation of his detachment would permit.

[1] Muhlenberg's Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg, p. 248.
[2] Kapp's Steuben, p. 426.

On the 26th of April the British repaired the bridge across the Appomattox River, which had been destroyed by Steuben's force upon its retreat, and crossed to the other side; they continued their march, upon the 27th, to Osborne's, upon the south side of the James River, about thirteen miles below Richmond; and they moved to Cary's house, not far from Manchester, opposite to Richmond, on the 29th, the day La Fayette took possession of the city. Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe says, "Next morning they marched to Manchester, from whence they had a view of M. Fayette's army, encamped on the heights of Richmond; on the evening they returned to Cary's."[1] Although General Phillips had largely the advantage in point of disciplined troops and munitions of war, his force amounting to twenty-three hundred regulars, rank and file, according to La Fayette's estimate, whilst that of the Americans contained but nine hundred regular troops, he did not venture to attack Richmond; but, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe's statement, "the troops fell down the river in prosecution of such further enterprises as Gen. Phillips had determined upon."

La Fayette reported his operations in the mean time to General Greene, as follows:[2]

"The command of the water, and such a superiority of regular troops, gave them possession of our shore. There was no crossing for us, but under a circuit of fifteen miles, and from the number and size of their boats, their passage over the river was six times quicker than ours.

"Richmond being their main object, I determined to defend this capital, where a quantity of public stores and tobacco was contained. General Nelson was there, with a corps of militia, and Generals Stuben and Muhlenberg, higher up on the other side. The same evening, we were by summons from General Phillips, made accountable for the public stores on board vessels

[1] Military Journal, p. 201.

[2] From "Camp on Pamunkey River," May 3d, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 507.

near the town, which (he declared) should certainly fall into his hands.[1]

"Next morning the enemy moved to Manchester, opposite Richmond, where they burnt the warehouses. Six hundred men ventured on this side, but were timely recalled, and, being charged by a few dragoons of Major Nelson, flew into their boats with precipitation.

"Knowing General Phillips's intention against Richmond (orders for attack had been already given), I directed Baron de Stuben to join us, and collected our force to receive the enemy, but the same night they retreated to Osburn's, from thence to the neck of land formed by James River and Appomattox, where they have re-embarked. . . . The enemy have lost some men killed, prisoners and deserters. Since the British army landed at City Point (some flour excepted at the Court House), no public property has been destroyed."

The truth is that General Phillips's expedition had been a failure in everything save the committing of depredations through the country. He had been defeated by La Fayette in his main object of taking Richmond, and he was retiring with his army down the river James. Indeed, there is no doubt that he was forced to admit this to himself, and that he saw with considerable mortification that he had been checked by the energetic measures and the rapidity of movement of the young American commander, which he had not suspected in the least, nor provided for.

La Fayette had direct evidence of this from one of his own officers who had been despatched to the British camp with a flag of truce, and who, whilst there, heard General Phillips express himself upon the subject. In a letter to General Washington a few days later,[2] La Fayette said,

[1] See Simcoe's Military Journal, p. 199: "In this situation Gen. Arnold sent a flag of truce to the enemy, offering half the contents of their cargoes in case they did not destroy any part; the enemy answered, 'That they were determined and ready to defend their ships, and would sink in them rather than surrender.'"

[2] From Camp near Bottom's Creek, May 4th, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State; and printed in Correspondence, American edition, page 508.

"General Phillips has expressed to an officer on flag, the astonishment he felt at our celerity, and when, on the 30th, as he was going to give the signal to attack, he reconnoitred our position, Mr. Osburn, who was with him, says that he flew into a violent passion and swore vengeance against me and the corps I had brought with me."

He was amply justified in saying, in the same letter, "The leaving of my artillery appears a strange whim; but had I waited for it, Richmond was lost;" and he added, "Major Galvan, who has exerted himself to the utmost can not be with us under two days, as he never could obtain or seize horses for the artillery and ammunition wagons. It is not without trouble I have made this rapid march."

La Fayette's movements and the conduct of his detachment elicited from the Commander-in-Chief expressions of the most cordial sympathy and approval, in answer to the reports made by La Fayette up to and including the 18th of April, the day before he marched from Baltimore with his detachment; this was the latest news General Washington had received upon the 5th of May, when he wrote, from his head-quarters at New Windsor,[1]—

"I have received with exceeding great satisfaction and pleasure your favor of the 18th of April, and am extremely rejoiced to learn, that the spirit of discontent had so entirely subsided, and that the practice of desertion would probably be totally stopped among the troops under your command. The measures you had taken to obtain, on your own credit, a supply of clothing and necessaries for the detachment, must entitle you to all their gratitude and affection; and will, at the same time that it endears your name, if possible, still more to this country, be an everlasting monument of your ardent zeal and attachment to its cause, and the establishment of its independence. For my own part, my dear Marquis, although I stood in need of no new proofs of your exertions and sacrifices in the cause of America, I will con-

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 35.

fess to you, that I shall not be able to express the pleasing sensations I have experienced at your unparalleled and repeated instances of generosity and zeal for the service on every occasion. Suffer me only to pursue you with my sincerest wishes, that your success and glory may always be equal to your merits."

The British troops under General Phillips, who, as we have seen, withdrew to Cary's house from Manchester on the 29th of April, continued to retire, and proceeded, by way of Osborne's, to Bermuda Hundred, at which point the whole army embarked on the 2d of May,[1] and, moving down the James River, on the 7th the fleet anchored off Brandon's house, on the south side of the stream, where the troops immediately landed, except the light infantry, who were sent to City Point.

La Fayette followed on the north side of the James, with his little force, to watch the enemy and to impress them by his presence, which was indeed the only thing he could do; for he was too weak to fight unless an opportunity should offer in which the advantages of situation would be greatly in his favor, or unless he should be fortunate enough to come upon some of General Phillips's troops detached from the main body. He decided, with excellent judgment, to occupy the ground as near the enemy as possible, and to harass and annoy them without exposing himself to a surprise or a defeat, which must have resulted in disaster. His chief difficulty was that he had not troops enough; the most of those he had were militia, and he was unable to undertake any operation across the river because there was no way for him to transport his men or his artillery. On the 3d of May he was at the Pamunkey River, and on the 4th he camped near Bottom's Creek, with the British still below him, upon the south side.

His course at this juncture was closely watched by

[1] Simcoe, Military Journal, p. 202.

the enemy's leaders, who hoped, no doubt, to find in La Fayette a less capable soldier than his own actions have shown him to be; and Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe gave it as his judgment, after the war was over, that if they had landed on the north side of the James River on the 7th of May, instead of going ashore at Brandon's on the opposite side, "the British army would have been above M. Fayette, and he could not have avoided action."[1]

Whilst that British officer admits in his military journal that the movement of La Fayette in following General Phillips down the river was "the constant and good policy of the enemy," yet he imagined that by a sudden return from Blandford, and by a landing upon the north side of the James, the British troops would have reached "the heights of Richmond, most probably on the left flank, if not the rear, of Fayette, . . . whose gasconading disposition and military ignorance might possibly tempt him to stay too long in the face of troops, his equals in numbers, and superior in everything else that could form the value of an army."

It must be remembered, however, that, in spite of this superiority, the British were then retreating before La Fayette. It is interesting also to note that precisely the reverse of Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe's supposition was true: that La Fayette understood the inferiority of his own detachment, and that he was not only fully aware of the serious consequences which would follow a defeat, but also knew perfectly well that he must not permit himself to be driven into an engagement or leave the way open for the enemy to get behind him and seize upon Richmond.

His own report of his movements, written upon the spot, proves this. He said to General Washington in the letter from Bottom's Creek, on the 4th of May,[2]—

[1] Simcoe, Military Journal, p. 203.

[2] Washington Papers, Department of State.

"I am, however, uneasy, my dear General, and do not know what the public will think of our conduct. The little dependence they put upon the militia I cannot expose in an official letter. I cannot say that no boats, no waggons, no intelligence, not one spy could be obtained; that if once I had been manœuvring with Phillips he had every advantage over me; that a defeat would have scattered the militia, lost the few arms we have, and knocked down this handful of Continental troops. Great deal of mischief had been already done. I did not know but what the ennemy meant to establish a post; under these circumstances I thought it better to fight on none but my own grounds and to defeat the main and most valuable object of the ennemy. Had I gone on the other side, the ennemy would have given me the slip and taken Richmond, leaving nothing to me but the reputation of a rash, inexperienced young man. Our stores could not be removed."

It will be remembered that La Fayette was at this time under the orders of General Greene, and that his purpose was to assist his commander in every way within his power, and at the same time to defend the territory of Virginia from the marauding incursions of the enemy. He had received no communication from Greene as to the plan he was to pursue in the campaign; and, whilst he was anxiously waiting for instructions from him, he decided that if he could succeed in occupying the attention of General Phillips by a small body of troops along the James, he should contribute toward General Greene's relief, by preventing so much of the enemy's force from co-operating with Lord Rawdon or Lord Cornwallis farther to the south. All things considered, La Fayette deserves credit for having done, with his meagre resources and under difficult circumstances, when he was entirely without support, all that a general could do, and for having sustained himself with good judgment. The proof of this is that General Phillips moved with extreme caution, and kept his forces well together lest any detached body should be attacked by La Fayette; that, instead of offering to fight him, he rejected the proposition of

Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe to land upon the north side of the James and endeavor to outflank him; and that the British continued to retire down the river.

La Fayette said,[1]—

"No orders from General Greene have as yet come to me. I cannot conceive the reason of this delay in answering my letters. In the meanwhile, Phillips is my object, and if with a thousand men I can be opposed to three thousand in this State, I think I am useful to General Greene. In a former letter, he tells me that his object is to divide the ennemy; and, having no orders, I must be regulated by his opinion. I wish he will call for the Pennsylvanians and leave me here.

"The ennemy are gone down the river. I have detached some militia to Hood's where I mean to make a post. Colonel Lane with another corps of militia is gone towards Williamsburg. His orders are, in case the ennemy land there to annoy them, and in case they mean to establish a post, he is to disturb them until I arrive. This position is 16 miles from Richmond, 42 from Williamsburg, 60 from Fredericksburg. I have sent an officer at Point Comfort and established a chain of expresses to know if they appear to turn towards Potowmack. Should it be the case, Fredericksburg will have my attention. Having missed Richmond, Mr. Hunter's works at Fredericksburg must be their next object, as they are the only support of our operations in the southward."

La Fayette began, even at this early day, to hope that General Washington would decide to go to Virginia to take part in the campaign; though, of course, it was then impossible to foresee the circumstances which called the Commander-in-Chief thither later in the summer. He was interested in his present duty, which gave him a separate command and afforded what he most desired throughout the course of his services in the American War, active operations in the field. It was, indeed, this longing to be present when any important undertaking was to be begun which made him so constantly anxious to be with the main army, especially if the attack were made upon

[1] To General Washington, 4th of May, 1781, from Bottom's Creek: Washington Papers, Department of State.

New York, which he still looked upon as likely to be the decisive action of the Revolution.

"Your first letters, my dear General," he said,[1] "will perhaps tell me something more about your coming this way. How happy I would be to see you, I hope I need not to express. As you are pleased to give me the choice, I frankly shall tell my wishes. If you co-operate with the French against the place you know,[2] I wish to be at Headquarters. If something is co-operated in Virginia, I will find myself very happily situated for the present, in case my detachment remains in this State.

"I wish not to leave it, as I have a separate and active command, tho' it does not promise great glory. . . . It is not only on account of my own situation that I wish the French fleet may come into the Bay. Should they come even without troops, it is ten to one that they will block up Phillips in some rivers, and there I answer he is ruined. Had I but ships, my situation would be the most agreeable in the world."

During the latter days of April, La Fayette had an interesting correspondence with General Phillips, which appears to have arisen from a report that British troops had been fired upon by some of the American forces, in defiance of the laws of war, from under the protection of a flag of truce. This report, which reached General Phillips, was undoubtedly a false one; because La Fayette examined the question carefully and supported his reply to the British commander with affidavits which disproved it. But the tone of General Phillips's communication so plainly indicated his attitude of an officer dealing with the rebellious subjects of a sovereign whose forbearance in not visiting upon the offenders condign punishment for their misdoings toward Great Britain was due entirely to the clemency of the generous-minded King, that La Fayette justly resented it. If he had been himself an American by birth and education and tradition, he

[1] From Bottom's Creek, 4th May, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] New York.

could not have sustained the national character or the honor of the people of the United States better than he did in this case.

In sending copies of these communications to General Washington, he announced that he was about to enclose "copies of the strange letters I have received from General Phillips and the answers, which, if he does not behave better, will break up our correspondence."[1]

Two of these letters from the British general were dated at the "British Camp, at Osborn," the 28th and the 29th of April, 1781, respectively.[2] The first of them is as follows:

"SIR,—It is a principle of the British army engaged in the present war, which they esteem as an unfortunate one, to conduct it with every attention to humanity and the laws of war; and in the necessary destruction of public stores of every kind, to prevent, as far as possible, that of private property. I call upon the inhabitants of Yorktown, Williamsburg, Petersburg and Chesterfield, for a proof of the mild treatment they have received from the king's troops; in particular at Petersburg, when the town was saved by the labour of the soldiers, which otherwise must have perished by the wilful inactivity of its inhabitants.

"I have now a charge of the deepest nature to make against the American arms: that of having fired upon the king's troops by a flag of truce vessel; and, to render the conduct as discordant to the laws of arms, the flag was flying the whole time at the mast head, seeming to sport in the violation of the most sacred laws of war.

"You are sensible, sir, that I am authorized to inflict the severest punishment in return for this bad conduct, and that towns and villages lay at the mercy of the king's troops, and it is to that mercy alone you can justly appeal for their not being reduced to ashes. The compassion, and benevolence of disposition, which has marked the British character in the present contest, still govern the conduct of the king's officers, and I shall willingly remit the infliction of any redress we have a right to claim, pro-

[1] From Bottom's Creek, 4th May, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] Correspondence of La Fayette, American edition, i. 412.

vided the persons who fired from the flag of truce vessel are delivered into my possession, and a public disavowal made by you of their conduct. Should you, sir, refuse this, I hereby make you answerable for any desolation which may follow in consequence.

"Your ships of war, and all other vessels, not actually in our possession in James River, are, however, driven beyond a possibility of escaping, and are in the predicament and condition of a town blockaded by land, where it is contrary to the rules of war that any public stores should be destroyed. I shall therefore demand from you, sir, a full account of whatever may be destroyed on board vessels or otherwise, and need not mention to you what the rules of war are in these cases."

The second letter said,—

"When I was at Williamsburg, and at Petersburg, I gave several inhabitants and country people protections for their persons and properties. I did this without asking, or even considering, whether these people were either friends or foes, actuated by no other motive than that of pure humanity. I understand, from almost undoubted authority, that several of these persons have been taken up by their malicious neighbours, and sent to your quarters, where preparations are making for their being ill treated; a report which I sincerely hope may be without foundation. I repeat to you, sir, that my protections were given generally from a wish that, in the destruction of public stores, as little damage as possible might be done to private property, and to the persons of individuals; but at any rate, I shall insist upon my signs manual being held sacred, and I am obliged to declare to you, sir, that if any persons, under the description I have given, receive ill treatment, I shall be under the necessity of sending to Petersburg, and giving that chastisement to the illiberal persecutors of innocent people, which their conduct shall deserve. And I further declare to you, sir, should any person be put to death, under the pretence of their being spies of, or friends to, the British government, I will make the shores of James River an example of terror to the rest of Virginia. It is from the violent measures, resolutions of the present house of delegates, council, and governor of Virginia, that I am impelled to use this language, which the common temper of my disposition is hurt at. I shall hope that you, sir, whom I have understood to be a gentleman of liberal principles, will not countenance, still less permit to be carried into execution, the barbarous spirit which seems to prevail in the council of the present civil power of this Colony.

"I do assure you, sir, I am extremely inclined to carry on this unfortunate contest with every degree of humanity, and I will believe you intend doing the same.

"I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"W. PHILLIPS."

To these high-sounding phrases, which General Phillips wrote whilst he was retreating, La Fayette replied as follows:

"AMERICAN CAMP, April 30th, 1781.

"SIR,—Your letters of the 26th, 28th and 29th, came yesterday to hand. The duplicate dated at Petersburg being rather of a private nature, it has been delivered to Major-General Baron de Steuben. I am sorry the mode of your request has delayed the civility that had been immediately intended.

"From the beginning of this war, which you observe is an unfortunate one to Great Britain, the proceedings of the British troops have been hitherto so far from evincing benevolence of disposition, that your long absence[1] from the scene of action is the only way I have to account for your panegyrics. I give you my honour, sir, that the charge against a flag vessel shall be strictly inquired into, and in case the report made to you is better grounded than the contrary one I have received, you shall obtain every redress in my power, that you have any right to expect.

"This complaint I beg leave to consider as the only part in your letter that requires an answer. Such articles as the requiring that the persons of spies be held sacred, cannot certainly be serious.

"The style of your letters, sir, obliges me to tell you, that should your future favours be wanting in that regard due to the civil and military authority in the United States, which cannot but be construed into a want of respect to the American nation, I shall not think it consistent with the dignity of an American officer to continue the correspondence."

Aside from the fact that the pretentious language of General Phillips's communications, and the tone of condescension which he assumed, could not fail to be obnoxious to every American, the frequent enormities which

[1] General Phillips had been taken prisoner at Saratoga upon the occasion of the capture of Burgoyne.

had been committed under the British flag and in the British name, and which were known to everybody, made his statements so plainly discordant with the truth as naturally to invite the sarcasm with which La Fayette referred to his "long absence" from the army. For, however much the disposition of General Phillips may have been opposed to these depredations as an individual, and granting, as we do, the sincerity of his assurance that he wished the contest to be waged with humanity, at that moment this country was suffering bitterly from the very inflictions which General Phillips disclaimed. It was but a few weeks before the date of this correspondence that La Fayette himself had been obliged to say, in reply to an appeal from Governor Lee, of Maryland, for aid to protect the districts along Chesapeake Bay which were being ravaged by British privateers, "I most sincerely lament the depredations committed by the ennemy. This cruel and savage way of making war is the more exasperating as it is out of our power to either punish or to prevent these devastations."[1]

We have the testimony, also, of one of the British historians of the war, who served as an officer in the campaigns of Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis, in America: he informs us, in reference to the incidents of this same period a few weeks later than the correspondence just quoted, and during the march northward of Lord Cornwallis, that "At Halifax,[2] some enormities were committed by the British that were a disgrace to the name of man."[3]

As to the charge that American soldiers had abused the privileges of a flag of truce, La Fayette wrote to General Phillips, after having concluded his investigations,—

[1] From Elk, 10th April, 1781: Sparks Papers, Harvard College Library.
[2] North Carolina.
[3] Stedman, History of the American War, London, 1794, ii. 385, note.

"May 3d, 1781.

"SIR,—Your assertion relating to the flag vessel was so positive, that it becomes necessary for me to set you right in this matter. Inclosed I have the honour to send you some depositions, by which it is clearly proved that there has been on our side no violation of flags.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir, your humble servant,

"LAFAYETTE."

Whilst La Fayette was making such resistance as circumstances rendered possible against the British forces of General Phillips and Benedict Arnold in Virginia, and whilst General Greene was devoting his attention to the army under Lord Rawdon, Earl Cornwallis's lieutenant in the Carolinas, Lord Cornwallis himself, who, as we have seen, had retired to Wilmington after his embarrassing victory at Guilford Court-House, decided to proceed with his force northward into Virginia, his purpose being to release himself from a situation which might become extremely dangerous if General Greene should defeat Lord Rawdon and then turn toward Wilmington to cut him off from his supplies; and also to escape from the summer heats which were coming on, as well as to unite with the force under General Phillips's command in order to make a diversion in favor of the British operations in North Carolina.[1]

Lord Cornwallis appears to have believed that this movement upon his part would have the effect of drawing General Greene toward the north; and he entertained the opinion that the conquest of Virginia was of the greatest moment at that juncture, not only to secure the advantages temporarily gained in the southern country, but also, with that important State restored to the British dominion, to extend the King's authority in other directions.

He set out, therefore, with his army from Wilmington,

[1] Stedman, History of the American War, ii. 355.

on the 25th of April, 1781, and, after an undisturbed march through North Carolina, he reached Halifax, on the banks of the Roanoke River, early in May, whence he sent orders to General Phillips to join him, with his force, at Petersburg.

This news from Lord Cornwallis halted the British in their retreat down the James River, and directed their attention toward Petersburg, whither they proceeded immediately, in order to secure that position before La Fayette could reach there, in case he should have information of their purpose or should observe from their movements the change of their plan.

General Phillips fell violently ill of a fever about the time of the landing of his force upon the south side of the James River, on the 7th of May. The last order he gave his troops was to march toward Petersburg, in compliance with Lord Cornwallis's instructions, after which he became unconscious; and he died on the 13th of May. His command devolved upon Benedict Arnold, who was then the next British officer in rank. Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe, who was with General Phillips during his illness, says that his last material order was that which decided the British troops to proceed as quickly as possible toward Petersburg.[1]

Whilst the British force was moving in the direction of Petersburg to head off La Fayette, Arnold detached Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe and Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton along the road leading south, toward the Roanoke River, in order to secure the crossings of the Meherrin and the Nottoway, the only intervening streams, and to facilitate the advance of Lord Cornwallis, whose force was known to be at Halifax. This gave the British control of the country along the south bank of the James River and the Appomattox. There was no Continental

[1] Military Journal, p. 204.

force in Virginia sufficiently great to resist them, or to defeat the plan of their junction at Petersburg.

La Fayette, who had encamped at Bottom's Creek on the 4th of May, and who had received intelligence almost as soon as the British generals of Cornwallis's approach, returned to Richmond, where he was on the 7th. He was exceedingly anxious for the arrival of the troops from the Pennsylvania Line who had been promised him, and whose assistance now became doubly important by reason of the great increase of the enemy's forces in the arrival of Cornwallis from the South. Indeed, he felt that unless he obtained this support speedily he should not be able to continue his opposition in Virginia. He sent a despatch from Richmond to General Wayne, whom he supposed to be on his way from York, in Pennsylvania, to Virginia, in which he informed him, "In consequence of a new plan, General Phillips has landed on the south side of James River and Lord Cornwallis is advancing towards Halifax. . . . Hasten to our relief, my dear sir, and let me hear of you that I may regulate my movements accordingly."[1]

La Fayette crossed the James River with the design of reaching Petersburg; but he could not withstand the enemy or prevent their occupation of that town. Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe says that when General Phillips's army arrived at Peterburg they "made prisoners some of M. Fayette's suite, who had arrived there to prepare quarters for his army: this was a very fortunate prevention, as the grounds about Petersburg were very strong, if properly occupied, and bridges over the Appomattox would have secured a retreat to the defenders."[2]

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[1] 7th May, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. This letter is endorsed "Pass'd my office, 14th May, 1781, All good people will assist this express in getting forward. James Hendricks." Also, "This letter being of great importance must be forwarded day and night."

[2] Military Journal, p. 204.

It is evident that the earnest and industrious young American general was taking advantage of every opportunity within his reach. From "Osburn's," on the south side of James River, he sent word, on the 10th of May, to Baron Steuben, who was then in Richmond,[1]—

"The enemy are at Petersburg and we have no communication over Appomattox. A general engagement is now in the enemy's power and is not in ours. This disadvantage and my inferiority forces me to recross the river; but my position near Longfield's will be such as enables me to keep a post on this side, be within striking distance of the enemy, and, without exposing Richmond, to recross if I choose, at the narrowest part of the river. I request everything that can do for crossing a river, boats, canoes, scows (a ferry boat excepted), and planks to join two canoes, may be sent down from Richmond and the vessels. General Muhlenberg keeps this side until to-morrow, and our baggage and stores are ordered to Richmond."

Five days later we find La Fayette upon the north bank of the James, whither he had returned in accordance with his plan announced to Baron Steuben; and on the 15th he was encamped at Wilton, about eight miles below Richmond, making strenuous exertions, always with the odds against him, to prepare for the defence of the country, to collect and drill the militia, to procure arms, and to make use of every available resource which the State could afford.

"The arrival of the enemy at Petersburg," he wrote to General Weedon,[2] "their command of James and Appomattox river, the approach of Lord Cornwallis who is arrived at Halifax, such are the reasons which render our situation precarious, and with the handful of men I have there is no chance of resisting the combined armies unless I am speedily and powerfully reinforced. The army under General Phillips consists of 2400 men, that under

[1] Sparks Papers, Harvard College Library.

[2] From Wilton, 15th May, 1781: Collection of MSS. of Grenville Kaine, Esqre.

Lord Cornwallis is said to be composed of 2 Bns. of Light Infantry and Guards, two Bns. of Hessians, the 23rd, 33rd, 71st, 42nd, 64th, 82nd, British Regiments, Hamilton's and Martin's Corps, and the Legion under Colonel Tarleton.

"Our numbers in Continental troops are well known to you. There is more militia going off than there is militia coming in. The new called troops have hardly received their orders. What we have is, however, called the Army, and that is expected from us which an Army could perform. Every movement from James River exposes that side where the capital stands, and of course the whole Northern country. A defeat would be attended not only with a loss of men, but also with an irreparable loss of arms. I am therefore to request your best exertions that we may be furnished with men, with arms, with everything your influence can procure. Riflemen and Cavalry, or at least mounted Infantry, are particularly wanting. No time ought to be lost, as the danger is pressing and it will soon be too late to have it in our power to make a becoming resistance."

In order to move the army, he feared it might become necessary to have recourse to military impressment; though he adds, "The impressing business chagrins me beyond description. I hate this mode, and am truly unhappy to see that waggons either borrowed or impressed from poor people cannot be discharged. But no waggons can be got in these counties and to impress others (purchases are out of the question) we must send to a great distance. This detention of waggons concerns me more than I can express."

He sent a despatch from the camp at Wilton to General Wayne, begging him to hasten his approach, in the hope that he might arrive before Lord Cornwallis could form a junction with Arnold's force at Petersburg. The coming of Wayne was the only event which could place La Fayette in a situation to meet the enemy. If he arrived before Cornwallis, Arnold might yet be attacked and possibly dislodged from Petersburg or cut off from the army approaching from the South. If Cornwallis arrived first, the British army would be so much supe-

rior that nothing in the way of effectual resistance could be counted upon even from the united forces of La Fayette and Wayne.

Anxiously looking for the Pennsylvanians, therefore, La Fayette said in his message to General Wayne,[1]—

"Where this letter will meet you, I am not able to ascertain, but ardently wish it may be near this place, where your presence is absolutely necessary.

"The army under General Phillips, 2300 rank and file at the lowest estimate, are for the present at Petersburg, covered by Appomattox River on their front and on their right flank by James River. They have an absolute command of the water, and every movement I can make upon their left leaves this shore, the Capital upon which it stands, and the country the North side of James River entirely exposed.

"Lord Cornwallis was at Halifax and probably is by this time on his way to Petersburg. There is hardly a man, or at least hardly a gun to oppose him; so that his first engagement will be upon the banks either of Appomattox or James River. . . .

"You will know my regular force when I tell you it is 300 men less than when I was with you at Philadelphia. We have some militia but are in such a want of arms that I dare not venture them into action, for fear of an irreparable loss. Had I your assistance, and particularly before Cornwallis's arrival, I think we may do something with General Phillips's army. . . . Should you arrive before Cornwallis, I hope we may beat this army. Should both armies be united, your assistance is indispensable to receive their first stroke. By running a race with Phillips I reached Richmond before him. By coming here the same way you may baffle Lord Cornwallis's project of conquest. I beg leave to recommend that the baggage be left behind as it will impede your movements, and a forced march is necessary for our relief.

"I am now encamped on the North side of James River, 8 miles below Richmond. Should you come by Fredericksburg, you will, I think, find it shorter to take the road to Bottom's Bridge; but if you intended to cross higher up, your only way is to come to Richmond.

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[1] From Wilton, 15th May, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and duplicate in the Washington Papers, Department of State.

"I request, my Dr Sir, you will let me hear from you, that I may know the moment of your arrival, and make my dispositions accordingly. This article is of the utmost importance, and I am extremely anxious to know if your aid will come in time to be effective. In that case, it may be decisive; in the other it is necessary, and without your detachment we are too weak for a proper resistance. Lord Cornwallis, by the last account, was at Halifax, 80 miles from Petersburg. He marches with amazing celerity; but I have done everything I could (having no men nor arms in his way) at least to impede him by local embarrassments."

But, unfortunately for La Fayette's hopes and wishes, General Wayne was still in Pennsylvania, where, amid reverses and disappointments, he was struggling to organize and equip his detachment. It was not until the 26th of May[1] that he was able at last to set out from York, upon his road to Virginia, with eight hundred effective men,—a corps "much smaller in numbers than he had anticipated, and by no means well equipped."[2] Upon the 20th of May, La Fayette being powerless to prevent it, the forces of the enemy under Lord Cornwallis and those under Benedict Arnold formed a junction at Petersburg.

From this time forward the contest in Virginia became more serious. The operations carried on against the forces of General Phillips and Arnold, by which La Fayette hoped to create at least a diversion in favor of General Greene to enable the latter to pursue his undertakings in South Carolina, had now assumed the importance of a campaign which involved not only the safety of General Greene, but also the possession of the country from which he drew his resources, and to which he looked for reinforcements, the territory which was unquestionably the key to the situation in the South.

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[1] Journal of Lieutenant William Feltman: Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1853.

[2] Stillé, Major-General Anthony Wayne and the Pennsylvania Line in the Continental Army, p. 266.

With the State of Virginia in their undisputed possession, with La Fayette defeated and driven from the field, as it was expected by the British commanders that he soon would be, Greene would have been isolated and helpless; an impregnable barrier would have been erected between the Northern and the Southern States; North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia must have yielded to the enemy; and British dominion would most likely have been established over the whole South so firmly as not to have been again dislodged. It was a crisis in the progress of the struggle, the solution of which might readily have resulted in disaster to the American cause; the chances, indeed, were largely in favor of the success of Great Britain, whose army had every conceivable advantage on its side in a military sense; and Virginia had become the theatre of the war.

The situation was an extremely grave one for La Fayette, who now found himself opposed to a superior force of veteran troops, under the command of a veteran leader, Earl Cornwallis. La Fayette's troops consisted of less than a thousand Continentals, a little body of horsemen too insignificant to be effective, and a small force of inexperienced militia, many of whom were poorly armed and some not armed at all. That he should have ventured to face his enemy under these circumstances is remarkable, in view of the dangers which surrounded him at every step, and of the fact that a single defeat would have destroyed him. That he succeeded in holding the field against overwhelming odds, without exposing himself where a decisive blow could be dealt him, without losing his self-possession or yielding what it was possible for him to hold, is exceedingly creditable to his abilities as a commander; and this service contributed in no small degree to the success which ultimately followed at Yorktown.

As soon as General Greene received information that

Lord Cornwallis had started with his army for Virginia, he sent orders to La Fayette to remain there and take command of the forces in that State, to halt the troops of the Pennsylvania Line when they should arrive upon their road to the South, and to employ the Virginia drafts for the defence of their own territory.[1] Notice of his appointment to the command in Virginia reached La Fayette at the moment when he was watching the British forces at Petersburg in the hope of preventing the junction of Cornwallis with Arnold if Wayne's Pennsylvanians should arrive in time to co-operate. Whilst he was still at Wilton, on the 17th of May, he wrote to Baron Steuben,[2]—

"Having at last received an answer from General Greene, I am better fixed than I conceived myself to be in my present and future destination. The great distance that separates me from Headquarters, and the danger that attends despatches through a part of disaffected country had rendered me very anxious on the fate of my letter. General Greene was pleased to answer me the very moment the letter came to hand. From the delay which both despatches have met with, I am sorry to see what difficulties will attend our correspondence.

"General Greene directs that my detachment be stationed in Virginia, where I am to take command of the troops. What necessity had obliged me to do was in the same time consistent with the arrangement of the General. . . .

"General Greene refers me to you for a complete knowledge of the department. I beg, my dear Sir, you will take the trouble to give me an account of its situation. You so perfectly know what is necessary to give me an extensive and minuted knowledge of every branch that I will not enter into any detail. Until I receive your letter, without which I am not able to know the situation of things, I am employed in arranging the outlines of those great departments. . . . You perfectly know, my dear Baron, what ought to be done by the Assembly to give energy to government. Unless spirited measures are entered into, we are certainly ruined. Raising, mounting, arming, transporting, subsisting a body of

[1] General Greene to Governor Jefferson, 27th June, 1781: Greene's Life of Greene, iii. 556.

[2] Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

troops, are things that cannot be done under the present regulations. . . .

"General Greene having ordered the Carolina new levies to be opposed to Lord Cornwallis, it seems I should detain the Virginia recruits for the same purpose. But my opinion is that General Greene ought to be reinforced. When you have collected such a number as you choose to march to the Southward, you may forward them to South Carolina and take such new levies under General Sumner as will not have received positive orders to remain in North Carolina. But until General Greene's pleasure is known, I will keep the dragoon new levies, that may be added to Lt. Col. White's detachment. Should we be so very inferior in cavalry, Simcoe and Tarleton will overrun the country and there can be no stop put to the enemy's depredations.

"You have by this time received 1100 stand of arms from Philadelphia. The number of recruits you expect does not exceed 800. I hope you will be able to spare some of the arms that were in repair for the militia and have been ordered to Albemarle Barracks.

"It is my wish, that you will please to command every article that may serve towards raising, arming, equipping and subsisting your new levies. Every horse, every relief, by which the army in South Carolina can be benefited, I earnestly request you will have forwarded. The South Carolina troops are entitled to every preference, and from their successes depends our delivery. But, as we are in a critical situation, such arms as do not belong to the Continent and are useless to the new levies or any part of the army in South Carolina, ought, I think, to be carefully sent to us. Riflemen and mounted infantry are articles which I request you will forward as speedily and plentifully as is in your power."

Finding that it was impossible for him to undertake offensive operations against the British army, and convinced that he could not prevent the junction, La Fayette decided to return to Richmond, and to remove as quickly as possible to a point of greater safety the large quantities of valuable supplies which had been collected there. He broke up his camp at Wilton, therefore, and moved it to Richmond on the 20th of May, where his energies were taxed to the utmost to accomplish the various tasks suddenly devolving upon him.

"I have been long complaining," he wrote to Alexander Hamilton, from Richmond, on the 23d of May,[1] "that I had nothing to do; and want of employment was an objection I had to my going to the southward. But for the present, my dear friend, my complaint is quite of an opposite nature; and I have so many arrangements to make, so many difficulties to combat, so many enemies to deal with, that I am just that much of a general as will make me a historian of misfortunes and nail my name upon the ruins of what good folks are pleased to call the army of Virginia."

La Fayette's affection for Hamilton led him to write to him with great freedom upon subjects relating to his own affairs; and, expressing himself confidentially in this letter to his friend, he draws an interesting picture of the situation at that time, of his own attitude toward the army, and of the part he had taken in the movements of that campaign; all of which has an especial value to the student of American history.

"Our forced march," he continued, "saved Richmond. Phillips was going down, and thus far I was very happy. Phillips's return, his landing at Brandon, south side of James River, and the unmolested journey of Lord Cornwallis through North Carolina, made me apprehensive of the storm that was gathering. I advanced towards Petersburg, and intended to have established a communication upon James and Appomattox Rivers. Had Phillips marched to Halifax, I was determined to follow him; and should have risked everything rather than to omit making a diversion in favor of Greene. But that army took possession of Petersburg, and obliged me to stick to this side of the river, from whence reinforcements are expected. Both armies have formed their junction, and must consist of between four and five thousand men. We have nine hundred Continentals. Their infantry is near five to one; their cavalry ten to one. Our militia are not numerous, come without arms, and are not used to war. Government wants energy; and there is nothing to enforce the laws. General Greene has directed me to take command in this State; and I must tell, by the way, that his letter is very polite and affectionate. It then became my duty to arrange the depart-

[1] Hamilton's Works of Alexander Hamilton, i. 262.

ments, which I found in the greatest confusion and relaxation. Nothing can be obtained, and yet expenses were enormous. . . . Is it not strange that General Wayne's detachment cannot be heard of? They are to go to Carolina; but, should I want them for a few days, I am at liberty to keep them. This permission I will improve so far as to receive one blow, that, being beat, I may at least be beat with some decency. . . . The command of the waters, the superiority in cavalry and the great disproportion of forces, gave the enemy such advantages that I durst not venture out and listen to my fondness for enterprise. To speak truth, I was afraid of myself as much as of the enemy. Independence has rendered me the more cautious, as I know my own warmth. But, if the Pennsylvanians come, Lord Cornwallis shall pay something for his victory. . . .

"Come here, my dear friend, and command our artillery in Virginia. I want your advice and your exertions. If you grant my request, you will vastly oblige,

"Your friend,

"LAFAYETTE."

In an official report to General Washington which he sent from Richmond on the 24th of May,[1] La Fayette defines his situation as follows:

"The junction of Lord Cornwallis with the other army at Petersburg was an event that, from local circumstances, and from their so great superiority, it was impossible to prevent. It took place on the 20th, and having lost every hope to operate a timely stroke in conjunction with the Pennsylvanians, my ideas were confined to defensive measures. I therefore moved up to Richmond, where precautions were taken to remove every valuable property, either public or private.

"By an officer who was in Halifax after Lord Cornwallis, I find he has not left any post at that place. It appears his sick and wounded remained at Wilmington, and were replaced by the garrison. Reports concerning his numbers are so different that I cannot trust anything but my eyes. Until such an opportunity offers, this is the order of march in which 'tis said his Ldship crossed Roanoke. Col° Tarleton's Legion; Hamilton's corps; 23, 33, 71 British; 200 Tories; a Hessian Reg^{t}; the Lt. Infantry

[1] Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State.

and Guards, with 6 Field p^s. I am told that Generals Leslie and O'Hara are with him. I have received successive and repeated accounts that a British Fleet of Transports was arrived in Hampton Road. They were said to consist of 14 large and 16 smaller vessels, convoyed by 3 Frigates. M^r Day, D. Q. M. at Wm^sburg, writes that, on the 22^nd, 12 sail of ships, a sloop and a schooner got under way opposite James Town, the ships full of men, and horses on board the sloop.

"We have no account of any Fleet having sailed from N. York. Yesterday afternoon we had a heavy rain which Col^o Tarleton improved in surprising some militia in Chesterfield County, 30 of whom fell into his hands. This morning at 9 o'clk the enemy moved from Petersburg, towards City Point, and destroyed the bridge they had constructed over Appomattox. I have just received accounts that a body of them has landed at Westover; these are said to be the men who came up the river from Hampton, previous to which Gen^l Arnold had received a small reinforcement from Portsmouth.

"To my great mortification, I have heard this morning that the Pennsylvanians are not so near as I had been by every account positively assured. General Wayne writes me he will hasten to my support, and I am confident that he will not lose time at this critical juncture. But before he arrives, it is impossible that 900 Continentals and 40 horse, with a body of militia by no means so considerable as they are reported to be, and whom it is difficult to arm, be with any advantage opposed to such a superiority of force, such a number of cavalry, to which may be added their so prejudicial command of the waters. Our handful of men being the point to which militia may be collected, and the only check, however small it is, that the enemy may have in this State, it ought to be managed with a great deal of prudence, as its preservation is so very important to the fate of operations in Virginia."

It was true, as La Fayette had been informed, that the British, formidable as they already were, had received reinforcements; for a detachment of two British regiments and two battalions of Anspach troops had arrived, sent from New York by Sir Henry Clinton to support General Phillips, whom the British commander-in-chief feared to see overcome by the American army before Lord

Cornwallis could reach Virginia. Of this detachment, however, only one British regiment, the 43d, remained with the army in the field, where, after the junction, they were not considered necessary; the other regiment and the Anspachers were sent to the garrison at Portsmouth.[1]

La Fayette was fully aware of the dangers of his position and of the extreme caution with which it became him to act. His impulse was to undertake some operation in which there might be a possibility of even a partial success, in order to prove to the people of Virginia, by the evidence of his activity against the invader, that he was trying to defend their soil. But his better judgment restrained him from so grave an exposure of his little army, and he avoided an action, much against his will.

He confessed this to General Washington, to whom he wrote a personal letter from Richmond upon the 24th of May, the same date at which he made the official report which we have just quoted:[2]

"I ardently wish my conduct may meet with your approbation. Had I followed the first impulsion of my temper, I should have risked something more; but I have been guarding against my own warmth; and this consideration, that a general defeat, which, with such a proportion of militia, must be expected, would involve this state and our affairs in ruin, has rendered me extremely cautious in my movements. Indeed, I am more embarrassed to move, more crippled in my projects, than we have been in the northern states. . . . Had the Pennsylvanians arrived before Lord Cornwallis, I was determined to attack the enemy, and have no doubt but what we should have been successful. Their unaccountable delay cannot be too much lamented, and will make an immense difference to the fate of this campaign. Should they have arrived time enough to support me in the reception of Lord Cornwallis's first stroke, I should still have thought it well enough; but, from an answer of General Wayne,

[1] Stedman, The American War, ii. 386.

[2] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 416.

received this day, and dated the 19th, I am afraid that at this moment they have hardly left Yorktown.[1]

"Public stores and private property being removed from Richmond, this place is a less important object. I don't believe it would be prudent to expose the troops for the sake of a few houses, most of which are empty; but I am wavering between two inconveniences. Were I to fight a battle, I should be cut to pieces, the militia dispersed, and the arms lost. Were I to decline fighting, the country would think itself given up. I am therefore determined to skirmish, but not to engage too far, and particularly to take care against their immense and excellent body of horse, whom the militia fear as they would so many wild beasts."

This superiority in mounted troops was especially embarrassing to La Fayette, who had, as he said, forty cavalry-men to oppose to a fine body of horse at least eight hundred strong; and Lord Cornwallis obtained usually by the help of the negroes the best horses in Virginia for his men to ride. He had mounted upon race-horses his advance guard under Tarleton, who overran the country, and, "like birds of prey, seized upon everything they could find."[2]

La Fayette continued in this letter to General Washington, "Were I anyways equal to the enemy, I should be extremely happy in my present command, but I am not strong enough even to be beaten."

Immediately upon arriving at Petersburg, where he assumed command of all the British troops in Virginia, Lord Cornwallis decided to make it his first object to strike a blow at La Fayette; he intended to dislodge him from Richmond, probably to capture him, and afterward to proceed to Williamsburg and await instructions from Sir Henry Clinton as to the remainder of the campaign. "I shall now proceed," he said, "to dislodge La Fayette from Richmond, and with my light troops to destroy any

[1] Pennsylvania.

[2] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 270.

magazines or stores in the neighbourhood which may have been collected either for his use or for General Greene's army. From thence I purpose to move to the neck at Williamsburgh, which is represented as healthy, and where some subsistence may be procured, and keep myself unengaged from operations which might interfere with your plan for the campaign until I have the satisfaction of hearing from you." [1]

With full confidence, therefore, in the success of his undertaking, Lord Cornwallis advanced from Petersburg on the 24th of May, with his whole command, and, crossing the James River at Westover, he continued toward the Chickahominy. "The boy cannot escape me," he is reported to have said, in contemptuous allusion to La Fayette.[2] On the 27th the British army encamped at White Oak Swamp; and on the 28th they were at Bottom's Bridge, on the Chickahominy.

La Fayette moved out of Richmond on the 27th of May, in accordance with the decision which he had announced to General Washington, that, as all the valuable stores had been removed from there, it would not avail him to attempt the defence of a town which was no longer of great importance, and many of the inhabitants of which had already left it. His object now was, whilst exercising the utmost precaution to keep from being defeated by Cornwallis, to unite as speedily as possible with General Wayne and the troops whom he was expecting from Pennsylvania. With this purpose in mind, he started for the north, marching with such rapidity that although the British were directly in pursuit of him they were not able to overtake him: it happened occasionally, indeed, that he retired from a position just as the British advance guard came up. He was un-

[1] Earl Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, from "Byrd's plantation, north of James river," 26th May, 1781.

[2] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 272.

certain as to the road which General Wayne would take in marching toward the south; but he supposed it would be by way of Fredericksburg, and he headed his course, therefore, in the general direction of the Rappahannock River. It soon became evident that Lord Cornwallis comprehended this movement and was advancing to cut him off.

From Richmond, La Fayette moved to Winston's Bridge, near the Forks of the Chickahominy, whence he retired, on the 28th of May, to Colonel Dandridge's upon the South Anna, close to Goldmine Creek. On the 30th he retreated still farther northward, across the North Anna River at Anderson's Bridge, to Mattapony Church, in Spottsylvania County, where he was on the 2d of June.

From the Forks of the Chickahominy he wrote to General Wayne, on the 27th of May,[1]—

"The British Army under Lord Cornwallis have left Petersburg and marched to Maytox, South side of James River, from where they have been crossing to Westover. Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton is lower down on the South side; Simcoe at Westover. It appears their plan has been to turn our left flank. Their vast superiority, particularly in cavalry, enables them to hazard anything with impunity and security. Until you arrive, I am confined to skirmishes and yet very trifling ones, and have removed to this place, about seven miles N. E. of Richmond. Nothing so difficult as to procure intelligences. Lord Cornwallis is still at Westover. I wish he may continue; but, under the many disadvantages we have, I am ever apprehensive of round about manœuvres.

"The corps under Lord Cornwallis, General Phillips's army and a reinforcement from New York (the same I suppose you allude to), render his Lordship very formidable. The embarrassments we labor under are not only such as appear in newspapers. When we have conversed together, you will see that I am not without trouble in this part of the world. I impatiently wait for you, my dear Sir,—As a friend I depend upon your

[1] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

affectionate exertions; as a General, I know your personal assistance is by itself a valuable reinforcement, and the troops you have with you will (particularly if his Lordship thinks proper to divide his forces) in good measure rid us, when you are with me, of this runaway kind of war that I most heartily detest.

"Hasten to our aid, my dear Sir, and remember that, should we be overtaken before you arrive we will soon vanish into a very small army. The Continental detachment I have is excellent, but so very weak that it cannot afford of losses unless they answer a valuable end. By leaving my baggage to follow behind, I found that our march was much accelerated; the propriety of this measure you will be better able to judge upon the spot. There are many stages on the road where the men can find shelter. Your artillery detachment will also be very welcome; I am told you have a part of Moylan's dragoons.

"Preparations are being made on the road to Fredericksburg; that, at all events, will be your best way. From Fredericksburg your march may be regulated by our position. You may depend upon every information that you can wish for. But don't trust to reports, as this country abounds with news, and few of them are to be depended upon. Every movement shall very exactly be communicated to you and letters sent through Fredericksburg.

"I will be obliged to you, my dear Sir, in the same time that you acquaint me with your progress, to let me know the time when you expect to arrive, and the number of men you have got with you.

"The other day, it being very rainy, Tarleton surprised a party of militia and took about 30 or 40, some of whom were cut very barbarously."

La Fayette's course, at the date of this letter, was upon a line parallel with that of the enemy, he moving north a few miles to the west of them and keeping to the upper country. His theory as to their purpose was that they intended first to destroy his army and then to capture or destroy the stores which it was protecting; and he judged that they would advance to Fredericksburg.[1]

He had sent to General Weedon orders to collect the Virginia militia; but great obstacles were encountered

[1] To Governor Jefferson, from Goldmine Creek, 28th May, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

from the imperfect authority given by the State Government to do so. All the fine horses in the country were falling into the enemy's hands because the owners would not remove them. The orders for impressment were limited to a distance of twenty miles, and La Fayette appealed to Governor Jefferson to extend this privilege to fifty miles, otherwise, said he, "we cannot get a single horse. The British have so many dragoons that it becomes impossible either to stop or reconnoitre their movements, and much more so to send impressing parties around their camp. . . . No Riflemen, no Cavalry, no arms and few militia coming."[1]

La Fayette was flying before the storm. To have pursued any other course would have brought destruction upon him. Indeed, without extreme caution, even what he was doing would have been fraught with danger. But his correspondence shows, and the result proved, that all his movements were cautiously made and that he displayed excellent generalship.

On the 28th of May he wrote again to General Wayne, from "Hanover County,"[2]—

"Lord Cornwallis moved in the night up the road to Richmond and obliged our advanced parties to retire. We are falling back as he comes near us, and until you arrive it would be madness to engage.

"I am going to take a position 25 miles from Richmond and will move up there as soon as my Lord takes possession of the town. We are too strong for their light army and will be too remote for a sudden attack from their main body. The position is between James and Anna Rivers, above Allen's Creek Church. It covers our stores and has a short road to Fredericksburg.

"The place called Allen's Creek Church, or a place four or five miles above, is probably the point where we are to make our junction. Everybody I have consulted assures me that, from

[1] To Governor Jefferson, from Goldmine Creek, 28th May, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[2] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Alexandria to Fredericksburg is out of your way. In this case, my dear Sir, I think the shortest route will be the best, and as our point of junction, if it changes, cannot but be still higher up, you ought not to come too low down."

La Fayette states his own force at this time to have been about three thousand men, made up of twelve hundred regular troops, fifty of whom were dragoons, and two thousand militia.[1] It is interesting to observe that, in spite of his great need of more troops, and of his constant anxiety to improve his strength sufficiently even to be "decently beaten," he was not unmindful of General Greene's situation in South Carolina, but continued his efforts to assist that officer, offering him a part of his own resources which he could ill spare. When he was crossing the South Anna River, upon his road to the north, he wrote to Baron Steuben, who was endeavoring to collect the militia at Charlottesville and was protecting the magazines in Albemarle County, whither great quantities of supplies had been taken for safety from Richmond, but whose orders were to join Greene's army, that General Greene "must be supported, and I do not see how it will be done. Your small corps will afford some assistance; but the Maryland new levies and the Pennsylvanians are not soon to be expected. The best we can hope is that General Wayne has left Yorktown[2] the 23rd; and York, you know, is very far from Charlestown. I am apprehensive General Greene is deceived, as we have been, with regard to General Wayne's approach. . . . General Lawson writes me that, by a letter of the 12th, General Greene orders him to the southward, but says at the same time that Gen[l] Greene was not apprised of Lord Cornwallis's expedition. You know my opinion, and that I think the support of the Southern Army is our first object.

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[1] Précis de la Campagne de 1781: Mémoires de La Fayette, i. 478.

[2] Pennsylvania.

Perhaps I run into an extreme, as I argue against my own interest, and am afraid it may overpower my judgment. Was it an affair of a private nature, I had rather oblige my friend than myself, but as it is a public matter, to you I leave the decision."[1] He added, in reference to the enemy, "Lord Cornwallis has sent people to examine the fords of Jas River. He did since intend to turn our left flank; these schemes he seems to have abandoned and is on his way to Fredericksburg. I am apprehensive an expedition will also go by water up Powtomack, as Genl Leslie is said to have gone down to Portsmo. We march on a parallel line with the enemy, keeping the upper part of the country and disposed to turn back in case this movement is only a feint. I wish all our stores may be all collected at the Court House."[2]

Proceeding by Mattapony Church and Corbin's Bridge, La Fayette continued due north, to Ely's Ford, at the Rapidan River, where he arrived on the 4th of June. Although he began to suspect that the enemy had for the moment, at least, given over their pursuit of him, which was indeed the fact, he did not change his course, but concentrated all his energies upon the design for which he had moved so far northward,—namely, to unite with the Pennsylvanians. "It is not impossible but what Lord Cornwallis means to return towards the fork of James River. But the most probable manœuvre (I suppose these intelligences are true) will be either to go to Fredericksburg or to endeavour to turn our flank. In every case, our junction ought to be made as soon as possible. The apprehension of being turned and the conviction that, without you, no material opposition can be made, will perhaps oblige me to retire higher up than I am."[3]

[1] To Baron Steuben, from Goldmine Creek, 29th May, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[2] Albemarle.

[3] To General Wayne, from Corbin's Bridge, 2d June, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

This was what occurred, for, as we have just stated, two days later, on the 4th of June, La Fayette was at Ely's Ford, whence he changed his course, after having crossed the Rapidan River for greater security from the pursuit of the enemy, and turned toward the west. On the 5th of June he sent a despatch to notify General Wayne of his whereabouts, in which he said, "To-morrow I shall proceed to Raccoon ford, where I am told you may easily arrive to-morrow evening. . . . I am now to acquaint you that the enemy appear to be retreating towards James River."[1]

He still thought the enemy intended to move upon Fredericksburg, in order to capture the stores; though, from their having stopped their pursuit, he suspected they intended to make a diversion toward Charlottesville,—which, he said, he should not have been uneasy about if his directions had been followed and the stores at that point removed to Albemarle old Court-House, where Baron Steuben had collected six hundred regular troops of the new levies, and where La Fayette had ordered the militia to rendezvous:[2] so that he was in constant apprehension not only as to the safety of his army, but also as to the resources upon which it must rely if the campaign were to be continued. He wrote to General Washington, on the same day, from his camp near the Rappahannock,[3] "My circumstances have been peculiar, and in this State I have sometimes experienced strange disappointments. Two of them, the stores at Charlottesville, and the delay of the Pennsylvania detachment, have given me much uneasiness and may be attended with bad consequences." Nevertheless, he held to his determination first to meet

[1] To General Wayne, from Culpeper Church, 5th June, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] To General Greene, from Camp between Rappahannock and North Anna, 3d June, 1781: La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 520.

[3] Ibid., p. 519.

General Wayne and then to consider what might be done in the way either of offensive or of defensive operations. In addition to other obstacles with which he had to contend, some of his despatches had been captured by the enemy. He hastened to notify Baron Steuben of this, from Mattapony Church, on the 3d of June:[1]

"I have to inform you that an express with dispatches from His Excellency, Governor Jefferson, to me has fallen into Tarleton's hands. I am fearful there was some dispatches from you accompanied them containing some plans and information of our stores. I wish you to inform me as soon as you can. I wish the expresses to be directed to come by the route of Orange Court House. They should always pursue a safe route even if they are detained some time longer."

Having reached the Raccoon Ford of the Rapidan on the 7th of June, La Fayette determined to cross to the south side of the river and wait there for the Pennsylvania troops, whom he now knew to be approaching on the road from Frederick, Maryland.

[1] Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN.

On the 10th of June La Fayette had the extreme satisfaction of uniting his forces with the detachment of General Wayne. This consisted of three regiments of the Pennsylvania Line, commanded respectively by Colonel Richard Butler, Colonel Walter Stewart, and Colonel Richard Humpton,—less than one thousand men in all, —with a detachment of nine officers and ninety men, with six field-pieces, from Proctor's Fourth Continental Artillery.[1]

The British army, having pursued La Fayette toward the north as far as Cook's Ford of the North Anna River, where they were on the 1st of June, without having overtaken him, Lord Cornwallis concluded that it would be vain to follow any farther or to attempt to prevent La Fayette's junction with General Wayne. He therefore changed his course to the westward, and directed his attention to two objects which had been brought to

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[1] Captain John Davis, of the First Pennsylvania Regiment, who accompanied General Wayne, fixes the date of this junction, in his Journal which has been published in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. v. No. 3:

"June 8th, *Culpepper County.*—Took up the line March at Sun rise. Reach'd the North Branch Rappahanack at 10 oClock, troops waded the river and proceeded nine miles into this County.

"9th *Orange County.*—Took up the line of March at six oClock, cross'd the South Branch Rappahanack & proceeded Five miles into this County; cuntry poor & buildings very small.

"10th. March'd at 5 oClock; a thin poor cuntry. Join'd the Marquis's this day, made a march of 23 miles, passed a body of Militia, 1800 men."

See also Lieutenant William Feltman's Journal, Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1853.

his notice through intelligence received during his march. One of these was to break up the session of the General Assembly of Virginia, which had met, under a guard, at Charlottesville, for the purpose of levying taxes and calling out the regular troops and the militia of the State. The other was to attack Baron Steuben at the Point of Fork, on the James River, where he was guarding the stores which had been collected at that place. For the first of these expeditions, Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton was detached with one hundred and eighty of his famous cavalry legion and seventy mounted infantry of the 23d regiment. For the second, Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe was detailed with a body of five hundred men, composed of the Queen's Rangers and a detachment from the 71st regiment.

Tarleton proceeded with extraordinary rapidity toward his destination, capturing upon his way twelve wagons of arms and clothing which were being sent to General Greene's army: these he burned or otherwise destroyed. His advance upon Charlottesville was so suddenly made that it was not discovered until he was almost within the town. He made prisoners seven members of the Assembly, and very nearly captured Governor Jefferson; after which he destroyed a large quantity of stores, among which were a thousand muskets, four hundred barrels of gunpowder, and some Continental clothing. His purpose having been accomplished, he moved his detachment down the Rivanna River, to be ready to co-operate, in case of necessity, with Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe, as he had been ordered to do.

The Point of Fork, to which Simcoe had been ordered to proceed, is a point of land enclosed by the junction of two rivers, the Rivanna and the Fluvanna, to form the James. The position of Baron Steuben was between these two streams, near their confluence, in Fluvanna County, Virginia.

Simcoe's march was naturally not so rapid as that of Tarleton, because his detachment was larger and was composed to a great extent of infantry. Nevertheless, by pushing forward as fast as possible, and by arresting every person whom he met, in order to prevent intelligence from being given, he succeeded in approaching close to Steuben without being discovered. He found that the Baron had heard of Tarleton's movement and appeared to be making preparations to avoid an attack; but it was evident that he knew nothing of Simcoe's presence.

When Simcoe arrived upon the ground, he was informed that Baron Steuben had begun to move his stores to the south side of the Fluvanna River, and that he was passing that stream with his troops, intending to proceed to the southward to join General Greene, in obedience to his orders. Counter-orders had been sent to him by which he was directed to stay in Virginia with La Fayette; but these had never reached him, having been intercepted by Tarleton, as Simcoe knew.[1]

As the Fluvanna River was too deep to ford, and as the British had no boats upon the north side, where they now were, Simcoe could not hope to accomplish the purpose of his expedition, because Baron Steuben was upon the other bank, out of his reach. But before retiring toward the main body of the British army he hit upon a device by which to deceive Steuben, in the hope of impressing him so greatly with the danger which threatened him that he would retreat and leave large quantities of his stores behind. This was entirely successful: Simcoe drew up his men in such a manner upon the north bank of the stream that Steuben was led to believe that this was the advanced guard of the whole army of Cornwallis, especially as the most had been made of the red-coats from the 71st regiment, who were im-

[1] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 294; Simcoe's Military Journal, p. 219.

mediately distinguished from the ordinary light troops and recognized as British regulars.

During the night Steuben retreated with his whole force, leaving a great quantity of stores behind him upon the river bank. Upon the following morning it was evident that the Americans had gone, and Simcoe sent about twenty men of his light infantry across the river in a large canoe brought from the other side by a sergeant of the Queen's Rangers who swam over for it, and in some small row-boats which had been procured along the Rivanna, with orders to destroy whatever stores could be found, and then to return. This order having been carried out, Simcoe marched in the direction of Goochland Court-House, in accordance with his instructions. Tarleton having been ordered also to follow that course, and Lord Cornwallis having moved his main body with the purpose of meeting these detachments, the whole British army reunited in Goochland County, not far from the fork of the rivers, on the 7th of June.

Some of the historians of the Revolution have treated this movement of Baron Steuben as a matter of no consequence;[1] and La Fayette himself, whose official correspondence shows him always to have been considerate of Baron Steuben, tells us in his "Mémoires historiques,"[2] in referring to these expeditions of Tarleton and Simcoe, "The second" (that of Simcoe) "did no important damage;" and in his "Précis de la Campagne de 1781"[3] he says of it, "Another detachment moved against the Point of Fork, where General Steuben was drilling six or seven hundred recruits; he evacuated that position, believing that his orders required him to withdraw in the direction of Carolina.—Some stores of no great consequence were destroyed."

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[1] See especially Kapp's Steuben, p. 444.
[2] Vol. i. p. 272.
[3] Ibid., p. 478.

While there is no doubt that Steuben's position was an exceedingly embarrassing one, as was every step in this part of the Virginia campaign, in the face of Lord Cornwallis's army, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that his flight before Simcoe was precipitate, and that he sacrificed unnecessarily a valuable supply of arms and munitions, all of which had at that time a double value from the great needs of the army and from the difficulty of equipping men enough to defend the State. No one will assert that Steuben could have faced Cornwallis or a large detachment of the British army; but he had all the advantages of situation beyond the river, which the enemy could not cross immediately under the most favorable circumstances. Even if Cornwallis's army had been there it would have had no boats, and it would have taken several days to collect boats or to construct rafts. The stores which Steuben permitted to be destroyed, and which, Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe informs us, "a guard of twenty or thirty men would have effectually prevented the Rangers from destroying," are enumerated by that officer as follows:[1] "Two thousand five hundred stand of arms, a large quantity of gunpowder, case shot &c., several casks of saltpetre, sulphur, and brimstone, and upwards of sixty hogsheads of rum and brandy, several chests of carpenter's tools, and upwards of four hundred intrenching tools, with casks of flints, sail cloth and waggons, and a great variety of small stores, necessary for the equipment of cavalry and infantry: such linen and necessaries, as would be of immediate service, were divided among the captors. There were taken off, a thirteen-inch mortar, five brass eight-inch howitzers, and four long brass nine pounders, mounted afterwards at York Town; all French pieces, and in excellent order."

There is in the Department of State at Washington a

[1] Simcoe's Military Journal, pp. 222 and 223.

personal letter from La Fayette upon this subject, dated at "Allen's Creek, 22 miles from Richmond, 18th June, 1781," addressed to General Washington, which clearly states the opinion he himself held, whilst it also indicates the sentiment of the country, as to Steuben's conduct at that time. He said therein,—

"The conduct of the Baron, my dear General, is to me unintelligible. Every man, woman and child in Virginia is roused against him. They dispute even on his courage, but I cannot believe their accusations. I must, however, confess that he had 500 and odd new levies and some militia; that he was on the other side of a river which the freshet rendered very difficult to be crossed, particularly by people that had no boats; that the greater part of the accounts make Simcoe 400 strong, half of them dragoons; that our stores on the south side were destroyed by about 30 or 40 men; that the Baron went to Staunton River, about 70 miles from the Point of Fork; that the militia abandoned him and I am informed the new levies deserted from him because they did not like his manœuvre. General Lawson and every officer and soldier, both in the regulars and militia, are so much exasperated against the Baron and cover him with so many ridicules that after I have obtained a junction with him I do not know where to employ him without giving offence.

"Had not the Assembly at Charlotteville and the State Board of War sent for arms which they intended to fight with and which upon the ennemy's approach were left in their way; had the twelve hours been improved that were given them by those repeated alarms; had not the Baron abandoned an unattackable position before so inferior a force, the reason of which no man of sense will be able to understand, I would have the pleasure to say that Lord Cornwallis's journey to Virginia has not produced him the smallest advantage. The delays of the Pennsylvania line, the neglect in the several departments, have all been combined to bring about what the Baron's retreat has effected. Our loss is not very considerable; but, in our situation, we cannot afford losing. This affair has chagrined me, but the enclosed copy will show you that I avoid reflecting on the man who ought to have better managed our affairs. Upon him was my entire dependence in that respect.

"The Baron wished for a journey to the Southward, the orders to stay in this State had been intercepted, but all this

cannot be an excuse. I request you, my dear General, to remember that this communication is not to the Commander-in-Chief."

After he had united with General Wayne, La Fayette's position assumed a greater importance than it had had before. He was now considerably stronger; and his operations began to encourage the Virginians, who at last supplied him somewhat more vigorously with militia and with the new levies enlisted for eighteen months, called "eighteen months men." He had succeeded, by means of extremely cautious movements, in preserving his original force; he had led Lord Cornwallis's army into a long and fatiguing march through the country, during which the British were as much exposed to the elements as the Americans; for, just as La Fayette had left his tents and his camp equipage behind in order the better to move away from the enemy, so Cornwallis had done in order the more readily to follow him. But now, by uniting also the troops under Baron Steuben with his own increased force, he would have a very respectable corps with which, if not to measure strength with the enemy, at least to defend the stores against their attacks and to watch Cornwallis, to hover upon his rear, to skirmish with his outposts, and, if opportunity afforded, to strike. The main object, however, was, for the present, the protection of the stores; and to this he devoted his attention without delay.

Lord Cornwallis had concentrated his forces, after the expeditions of Tarleton and Simcoe, near the Point of Fork, as we have seen; he had gone into camp at Elk Hill, and he still occupied that position when General Wayne arrived at La Fayette's camp near Raccoon Ford.

La Fayette set out upon the same day upon which the Pennsylvanians arrived, and, turning southward, he now faced the enemy, instead of flying before them as he had previously been forced to do. From this time forward the

action of the Virginia campaign was reversed: the British were retiring, and La Fayette was following them. He moved to the North Anna on the 10th of June, and crossed that stream at Brock's Bridge; thence to the southward, through Louisa County, to the South Anna River, near Boswell's Tavern, where he was on the 12th. From there his purpose was to reach the highway leading toward Charlottesville and Staunton, whither the stores had been removed, in order to place himself between those points and the army of Cornwallis. But if he proceeded by the main highway leading thither he would expose his flank to the enemy. Fortunately, he received information that an old and abandoned road led, in a roundabout way, through the woods; and, proceeding by this, at the same time carefully concealing his march from the British scouts, he succeeded in reaching Mechunk Creek.

La Fayette's account of this movement, as he gave it in his "Précis de la Campagne de 1781,"[1] is as follows: "In order to take a position above the enemy, the common road would lead by the head of Bird's Creek. Lord Cornwallis moved his advanced guard thither, intending to fall upon our flank; but the Americans repaired during the night a road which was little known, and, by concealing their movements, occupied the ground at Mechunck Creek." Here he was joined by six hundred mountain riflemen from the adjacent country; and he had attained a position some fifteen miles to the west of the British army, where, as he desired, he lay between it and the Continental stores.

The journal of a militia officer quoted in Burk's History of Virginia[2] says of the march from Raccoon Ford, "The route from thence was in by-roads in direction of the Rivanna River, through Orange, the upper end of Louisa

[1] Mémoires de La Fayette, i. 478.
[2] Vol. iv. p. 507.

and Fluvanna Counties. Near Boswell's Tavern the army halted one night, and the next day was marched along a new road to Mechunk Creek, which goes by the name of the Marquis's Road to this day. The army halted a day or two at this place, and the route from thence was generally in the course most direct to Williamsburg." Captain Davis's note of the march to Mechunk Creek, in his Journal,[1] is:

(June) "12th *Louisa County.* March'd at 6 oClock through woods and Pines, at length got to the main road, leading to Fredericksburg, proceeded 5 miles on it & encamped.

"13th. Troops continued in their encapm't this day."

La Fayette decided to unite his forces now, in order to strengthen his position as much as possible: therefore he wrote to Baron Steuben, on the 13th of June,[2]—

"A letter from Lt. Col. Davies, and public reports, have since apprised me of your movements towards Staunton River on the other side of which you intended to stop. Our junction with the Pennsylvanians is formed, and we have again got between the ennemy and our stores. Nothing has been lost but what was left on the Point, and the few articles that, notwithstanding yours and my directions, it had been thought proper to send to Charlottesville. I have ordered the stores to be removed higher up, and am now in a better situation to defend them.

"I request, my dear Sir, you will immediately return this way and, with the Continentals and militia under your command, hasten to form a junction with us. I am afraid Gen[l] Greene's letter requesting you to remain with us has not got to hand. But, unless you have received orders subsequent to General Greene's march against Ninety Six and Augusta, I can assure you his desire was then we should form a junction.

"Should the ennemy cross James River, what I do not believe, and none of them has yet attempted, it must be with a view to reconquer Carolina. In this case you would be in their way, and I would request every obstruction to be given to them, as I shall myself follow them as expeditiously as possible. But, on

[1] Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. v. No. 3.

[2] From Mechunk Creek: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

the contrary, should they make the conquest of this State their main object, our united force is not too much to resist them.

"In case you had received some different directions from the General, my disposition will, of course, be superseded and go for nothing.

". . . The enemy were yesterday at Byrd's ordinary, 13 miles from this. Some accounts this morning report their advanced parties were before day within seven miles."

This was the nearest that the British army ever came to the reconquest of Virginia: from this point the tide began to ebb. La Fayette unquestionably saved the State. For, although Lord Cornwallis had driven La Fayette rapidly before him, and had marched in any direction that it had suited him to go, and although the British army retained its superiority, which made it too formidable for the Americans to meet it in the open field, yet it was the presence of La Fayette with his little army which interrupted the destruction of public stores and disappointed Cornwallis in the results of his expedition. It was the presence of La Fayette, with his cautious movements, his never-failing watchfulness, his soldierly conduct, and his skill in manœuvring in the face of his antagonist, which prevented the complete subjugation of the country. Lord Cornwallis was not bent upon the reduction of Virginia at the outset, it is true; but, having advanced much farther into the interior than he probably intended, and having subjected his army to the hardships of a rude campaign during the heat of summer, it is not to be supposed that he would have abandoned that important State if it had seemed likely to him that he could hold it.

He might have turned upon La Fayette again, and have driven him back, at the expense of wearing out his own troops. He might have forced an engagement, the advantages of which, at all events, would have been doubtful; for, although he was superior in point of numbers, Lord

Cornwallis had already had the experience, upon two occasions, of fighting against inferior American forces upon their own ground: one was at the Cowpens and the other at Guilford Court-House. In each of these cases he had remained superior—and helpless.

Whatever may have been the considerations which influenced him at this time, the British commander now began to retreat. He left his Camp at Elk Hill on the 15th of June, and turned to the eastward in the direction of Richmond. On the 16th he entered that city, and on the 20th he left it, still moving to the east, with the object of gaining Williamsburg.

He was immediately followed by La Fayette, who on the 15th of June wrote to Baron Steuben,[1]—

"Lord Cornwallis is returning to Richmond and we are following him. I think for the present you cannot better employ the time than in building rafts and collecting boats, and will have the honor to write you to-morrow.

". . . I am told there are some boats at Carter's Ferry. I will be the day after to-morrow at Lt. Col. Dandridge's, 22 miles from Richmond. I understand it is 25 miles from Carter's Ferry. Should you be able to join us by the 17th or 18th, it would make me very happy."

During the early part of La Fayette's campaign in Virginia, after the death of General Phillips and before the arrival of Lord Cornwallis from North Carolina, a communication arrived at his camp under a flag of truce, from the British commander, relating to an exchange of prisoners, which produced an extraordinary situation. The communication was addressed by Benedict Arnold to the commanding officer of the American troops, Arnold being at that time, it will be remembered, in command of General Phillips's army. La Fayette promptly refused to receive any message from the traitor; and, having in-

[1] Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

vited the officer who came with the flag to enter his headquarters, he asked him if General Phillips was dead. To this the officer replied that he was not,—though, in fact, he had died two days before; but Arnold did not wish that to be known,—whereupon La Fayette declined to accept the letter, which, having been dated at the British headquarters, should have come from the British commander. Upon the following day the officer returned with the same letter and said that he was now at liberty to acknowledge General Phillips's death, declaring also that Arnold was commander-in-chief of the British army in Virginia. La Fayette immediately returned the letter unopened, with the verbal message that he should hold no communication with Benedict Arnold, and that if he were requested to put into writing a minute account of his motives he should cheerfully comply with the demand, out of the regard he had for the British army. He accompanied the message by the following note to the officer with the flag:[1]

"*Note for Captain Emyne.*

"May 15th, 1781.

"The Major-General Marquis de Lafayette has the honour to present his compliments to Captain Emyne, and begs him to recollect that, on the supposition of the death of General Phillips, he said, 'that he should know in that case what to do.' From regard to the English army, he made use of the most polite pretence for declining all correspondence with the English general who is at this moment commander-in-chief. But he now finds himself obliged to give a positive denial. In case any other English officer should honour him with a letter, he would always be happy to give the officers every testimony of his esteem."

And shortly afterward, upon having ascertained the presence at Petersburg of Lord Cornwallis, who immediately assumed command of the British army, La Fayette opened the correspondence with him, with a view to arranging a cartel, by a note in which he said, "Your

[1] La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 415.

arrival at Petersburg makes me happy in a correspondence with the British General, and I hasten to send papers that are so interesting to the Convention Troops."[1]

This correspondence led to an understanding as to the exchange to be made. The attitude of La Fayette was especially gratifying to General Washington, to whom he reported it, and who wrote to him from New Windsor, on the 31st of May, "Your conduct upon every occasion meets my approbation, but in none more than in your refusing to hold a correspondence with Arnold."[2]

Arnold, on the other hand, stung by a refusal the purport of which he thoroughly understood, sent back an answer, full of bitterness, in which he threatened that all American officers and soldiers taken prisoners in future should be sent to the West Indies, "unless a cartel be immediately granted for the exchange of prisoners, as General Arnold has repeatedly demanded."

The subject of prisoners was an interesting one in a personal sense to Benedict Arnold, far beyond what he probably cared to express; for he knew perfectly that he was the one man in the whole British army whom the Americans would specially delight to take prisoner. That he had this in his thoughts is proved by an interesting bit of conversation held by him with one of the American prisoners taken during the Virginia campaign, of whom he inquired, "What do you think the Americans would do with me if they should succeed in making me a prisoner?" "We should cut off the leg which was wounded in the country's service," replied the soldier, "and we should hang the rest of you."[3]

In the mean time, whilst the enemy had retreated to Richmond, La Fayette followed eastward after them,

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[1] To Lord Cornwallis, 21st May, 1781: Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State.

[2] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 60.

[3] Arnold's Arnold, p. 347.

moving cautiously, with his patrols well advanced, along the south bank of the South Anna River, to Colonel Dandridge's, "23 miles from Richmond." From there he sent orders to Baron Steuben, on the 18th of June, to hasten the junction of the troops under his command with those of the main army, telling him,[1] "The enemy are at Richmond and its vicinity. We are upon ground in this neighbourhood, where we shall remain for your junction, which I request may be made to-morrow as early as possible. . . . Just as I was sealing the above, I received your letter informing me of your being at Rollings's, 5 miles above Goochland Court House. As this corresponds with my expectations, it makes no change in the orders necessary." Baron Steuben joined La Fayette upon the following day, with about four hundred and fifty Virginia new levies, which increased the army of the latter to a little over five thousand men, of whom two thousand were Continental troops and three thousand militia and riflemen.

As La Fayette frequently sent forward detached bodies from his command to watch the movements of the enemy, it happened occasionally that some of his forces came into very close contact with the British rear. Upon one expedition of this kind the corps of General Muhlenberg advanced so far toward Meadow Bridge as to attract the enemy's attention. Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, who was stationed at that point, judged that he might attack Muhlenberg with advantage, and came out against him with his cavalry on the 18th of June; but La Fayette threw his light infantry and the Pennsylvanians forward to General Muhlenberg's support, and Tarleton was obliged to retire without having won any credit or done the Americans any injury.[2] Captain Davis's Journal

[1] Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[2] Muhlenberg's Muhlenberg, p. 259; La Fayette to General Greene: La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 524.

contains this entry, under date of the 18th of June: "A sweet morning. I mounted guard. This day the enemy advanc'd on us. Our Camp struck at Sun Set. All the Continental troops March'd in order to surprise a party of horse; we continued till day, But on our arrival where they were, they had gone some hours." Upon the following day his entry informs us: "19th. *Henrico County.* Lay on our arms till 1 oCloc, then retir'd 4 miles in the cuntry where we lay down contented, destitute of any refreshment, Bedding, or covering."

La Fayette continued to advance as the enemy retired; and, whilst he was careful not to expose his own troops to a surprise or to an attack which might lead to their defeat, he was always ready to take advantage of any opportunity for an offensive movement. He had sent General Wayne to command the advanced positions, and he wrote to him on the 21st of June,[1] "By the time you receive this you must have accounts from the enemy. Should they be near us, this would be the good time for a night's attack. But I am afraid we will not have the opportunity. Whatever road they take, you will please to proceed on that route, and if opportunity offers to attack them, you will do for the best."

The enemy having evacuated Richmond on the 21st, La Fayette passed through the town upon the following day.[2]

Moving eastward from Richmond on the 22d of June, La Fayette threw General Muhlenberg's corps forward

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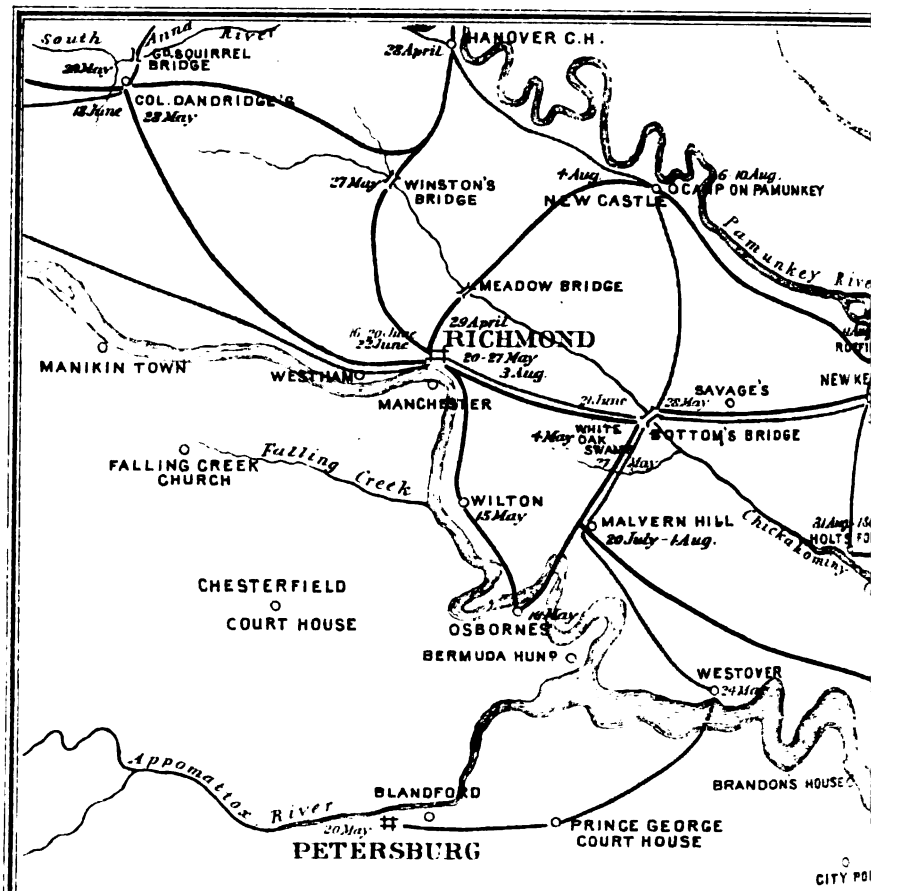
[1] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] "Yesterday morning the enemy evacuated Richmond, and seem to be bending towards Williamsburg. We are following them." La Fayette to Col. Davis, 22d June, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

"22nd *New Kent County*,—March'd at 2 oClock through a well inhabited country, though I can give no acc't of the people, as I have not been in a house for some days, though the look well on the road where the generally parade to see us. This day pass through Richmond, in 24 hours after the Enemy evacuated it,—it appears a scene of much distress." (Journal of Capt. John Davis, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. v. No. 3.)



MAP

showing the

OPERATIONS OF THE MARQUIS DE LAFAY

between Richmond and Williamsburg

IN THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN OF 1781.

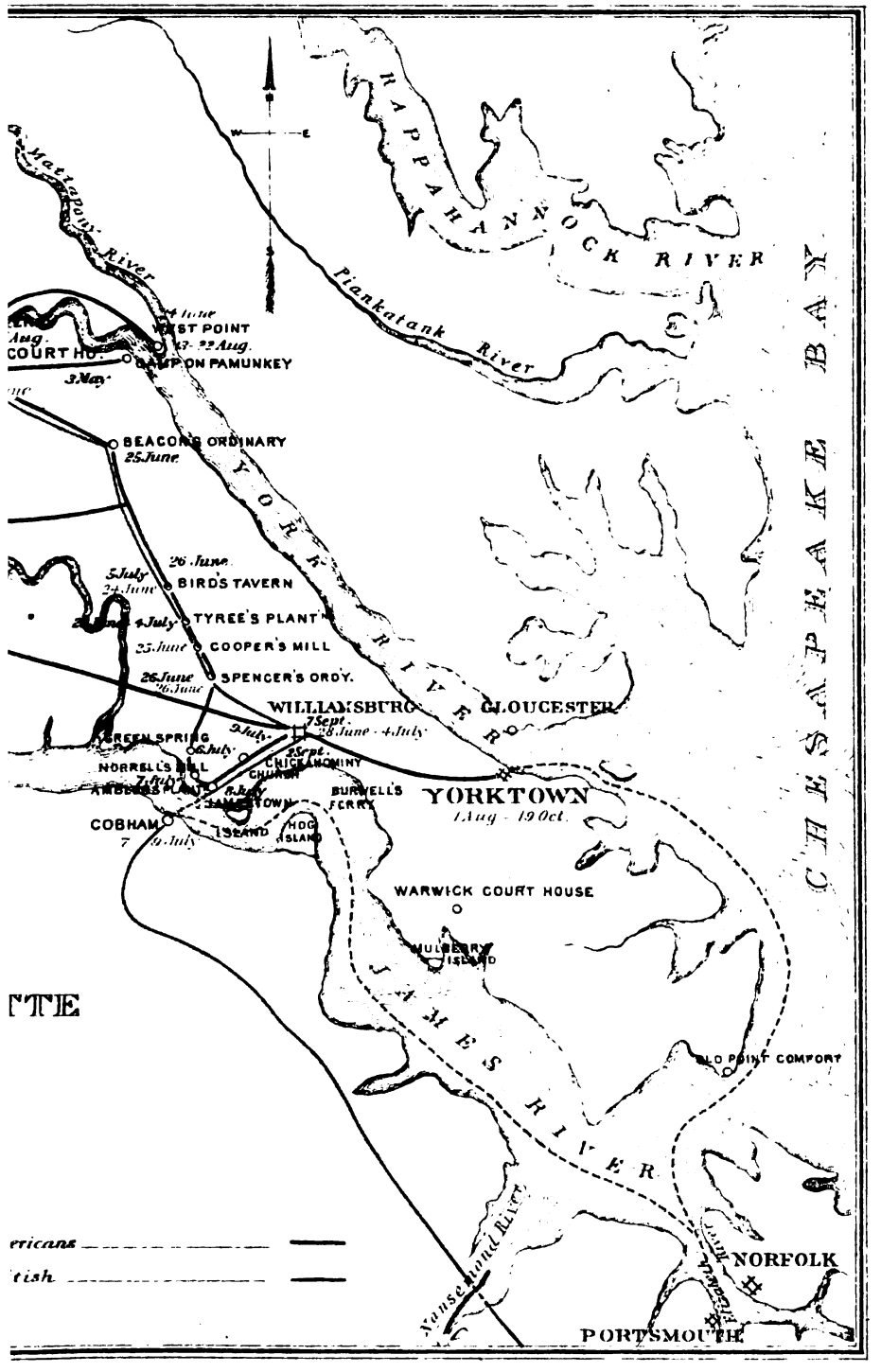
Compiled for Charlemagne Tower Jr.

by A. B. Cochran & Son,
CIVIL ENGINEERS.

1894.

SCALE OF MILES

0 5 10 15 20 25


RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER
Piankatank River
YORK RIVER
CHESAPEAKE BAY
JAMES RIVER
Nansemond River
WEST POINT
CAMP ON PAMUNKEY
COURT HO
BEACONS ORDINARY
BIRDS TAVERN
TYREE'S PLANT
COOPER'S MILL
SPENCER'S ORDY.
WILLIAMSBURG
GLOUCESTER
GREEN SPRING
NORRELL'S MILL
CHICKAHOMINY CHURCH
BURWELL'S FERRY
YORKTOWN
1 Aug - 19 Oct.
JAMESTOWN
COBHAM
HOG ISLAND
WARWICK COURT HOUSE
MULBERRY ISLAND
OLD POINT COMFORT
NORFOLK
PORTSMOUTH
Americans
British

early that morning to the fork of the road, eight miles above Bottom's Bridge, whilst he stationed General Wayne four miles to the east of Richmond upon the evening of that day. The enemy were upon the other side of Bottom's Bridge that morning, and the order given to General Wayne was to pursue the route to Williamsburg, pressing his march so as to approach the British rear.[1] Baron Steuben was directed to advance his troops six or seven miles that night and to proceed upon the following morning to Savage's, continuing upon the road to Williamsburg until a junction of the whole force should be completed.

La Fayette evidently intended to throw the strongest part of his army into the advanced position, in order to encourage the retreat of the enemy, and to protect himself at the same time against any sudden diversion which they might make to interrupt his march. As additional security, he ordered Baron Steuben to place "a horseman or two at the fork of the road, to bring intelligence or intercept any that may be coming to me. They are to be directed to bring it to this house to one of my aides."[2]

On the same day, the 22d of June, from "Process's house," he ordered General Wayne to move to the support of Muhlenberg:[3]

"You know Muhlenberg's situation relative to the enemy's. I wish you to approach as near him as possible. I have ordered the Baron, who is four miles in our rear, to move seven or eight miles to-night and to press by the way of Savage's early to-morrow in order to complete a junction with your troops.

"It may be necessary to send a party before to repair any damages which may be done Bottom's Bridge.

"I think we might derive advantage by a well chosen detachment of about 200 from your line under Col. Butler, who should

[1] La Fayette to Steuben, 22d June, 1781, from "Process's house," 5 o'clock P.M.: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

gain Muhlenberg with all practicable expedition. Besides the addition to his force, we shall be profited by Butler's services. If the enemy are to be injured, they must first be impeded by the troops with Muhlenberg which I wish to strike their rear.

"Could you not mount some of the detachment under Butler and send all the horse you can spare? I remain here to-night where you will direct intelligence."

By keeping his advanced parties well up at the rear of the enemy, and by incessant activity in sending his patrols in various directions, so that the American troops were almost constantly met with, and inaccurate, uncertain reports as to his movements were taken into the enemy's camp by spies, La Fayette succeeded in creating the impression among the British leaders that his force was considerably larger than it was. This belief, no doubt, hastened the retreat of Lord Cornwallis toward Williamsburg; and from evidence given at the time by people who were present it would appear that the British commander, after having pursued La Fayette with vigor through the country and across the rivers of Virginia, had changed places with him. At all events, the testimony of Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe is that he considered his position in command of a detachment of the Queen's Rangers, guarding the rear of the march and operating alone for forage in the surrounding country, to be one of extreme danger, because, he said, he knew the enemy to be active and enterprising, and "that it was their obvious policy, to follow Earl Cornwallis as far towards the neck of Williamsburg as with safety they could, and to take any little advantage which they could magnify in their newspapers,"[1] thus plainly admitting that the British had not gained control of the State of Virginia. Indeed, Simcoe declared that he knew Earl Cornwallis's intelligence as to La Fayette's movements "to be very bad; and he and Major Armstrong agreed with Captain Ewald, that the

[1] Military Journal, p. 226.

slightest reliance was not to be placed on any patroles from his Lordship's army;" therefore he consoled himself by the reflection that "the next advantage, to receiving good intelligence, is to deceive the enemy with that which is false," [1]—a maxim which, however true in a military sense, is not the sentiment one would express in regard to an enemy whom one could easily defeat or could afford to despise.

This is an important period in the Virginia campaign with regard to the attitude of La Fayette, because it marks the turning-point between the events of Lord Cornwallis's advance into Virginia, when he entered it from North Carolina with every promise of conquest and success, in the month of May, and those of his subsequent operations, during which he sought to maintain his position at Williamsburg, and which led to his defeat and capture at Yorktown in October, 1781.

There is a tone of relief in La Fayette's expressions at this time which indicates his growing confidence in his own position and in his ability to cope with the enemy, and we find him considering what offensive operations it may be possible to undertake with reasonable security. Lord Cornwallis's army, having retreated from Richmond, lay at Bottom's Bridge on the 21st of June; on the 22d it retired to New Kent Court-House, and on the 24th to Byrd's Ordinary, Simcoe with the Queen's Rangers and the Yägers keeping in the mean time two miles to the left of its position. On the 25th the enemy, still retreating, had arrived at Cooper's Mills, about twenty miles from Williamsburg. La Fayette followed closely upon their footsteps. He threw forward the corps under General Wayne, with the objects of striking, if possible, at a detached corps upon the way, and of cutting off the British foraging parties,—especially the latter.

[1] Military Journal, p. 226.

After a conference with General Wayne upon this subject, he wrote on the 25th of June to that officer,[1]—

"I have just received your letter and much approve of your endeavours to relieve Col. Simcoe of his burthen. Having given you the command of our advanced corps, consisting of Butler's advance and your Pennsylvanians, I request you to dispose them in the best way you think proper.

"I apprehend the enemy will wait for the arrival of their foraging party. How far a first attack upon Tarleton may attract their attention from Simcoe, you will better judge on the spot. I think the light infantry had better remain at the Court House sending a post of mounted riflemen on the road that is on their right flank, and another upon their left. I shall myself ride towards the Court House where I expect to hear from you. Drawing Tarleton into an ambuscade; intercepting Simcoe; and, if they move downwards, harassing their rear, will be the three objects you will have in view. Should the enemy remain at Byrd's, I have particular reasons, you may guess from my conversation of last night, to request you will make yourself well acquainted with the particulars of their position. Except the Riflemen that are to guard the flanks of the light infantry, all other Riflemen are subject to your particular orders and destined to co-operate with you. It will be well for you to move on a little before the light infantry reaches the Court House.

"Most affectionately

"Yours,

"LAFAYETTE."

The advanced guard under Colonel Butler came upon Simcoe on the 26th of June at Spencer's Ordinary, and attacked him immediately. A very brisk skirmish resulted, in which the British detachment was forced to give way until it was supported by Lord Cornwallis from the rear; but the Americans were obliged at last to retire before superior numbers, having lost several men and having inflicted considerable loss upon the enemy. The rising spirits of La Fayette's army are marked in

[1] From Beacon's Ordinary, 25th June, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

this engagement not only by the promptness with which Butler attacked the British, but also by the fact that, in order to come up with Simcoe, without a sufficient force of cavalry, La Fayette had mounted his infantry behind the light horsemen, giving each rider a companion, and had approached in that manner near enough to strike. Captain Davis reports that "At Six oClock in the morning we overtook a covering party, who retreated before us. We mounted a party of Infantry (Capt. Ogden's) behind lite Horse, who overtook their rear. We had a smartt skirmish Horse & foot in which we took some lite Horse & Cattle & kill'd 30 on the spot with inconsiderable loss."[1]

The news of this skirmish reached La Fayette at Byrd's Tavern on the 26th of June, two days after Cornwallis had left there; and it gave him evident satisfaction, for he wrote to General Wayne saying that he had received "some particulars of the skirmish," but that he should be glad "to hear some more minuted ones, what has been taken, what the enemy may have lost and so on, that we may improve everything to mark the retreat of his Lordship."[2]

Thus the first actual encounter had left the American army at least upon an equal footing with the enemy, and had aided La Fayette in his purpose of impressing the British with the activity and energy of his troops.

Lord Cornwallis made no further attempt to resist, but withdrew his army to Williamsburg, where he was encamped on the 28th of June, part of his troops having reached that point on the 25th.

La Fayette's march from New Kent Court-House in the direction of Williamsburg was upon a shorter line than that pursued by the British, and he had pressed them so

[1] Journal, *ut supra*. Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe made much of this affair in his Military Journal, p. 228.

[2] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

closely throughout the march that Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton says, "At the time the royal army quitted New Kent court house, the main body of the Americans approached within twelve miles of that place, which circumstance nearly occasioned Earl Cornwallis to countermarch, but, upon reflection, he pursued his design of moving to Williamsburgh, where he arrived on the 25th of June."[1]

The skirmish of the 26th of June had recalled the whole British army to Simcoe's defence, as Tarleton says: "Before the horses were unbridled, the sound of musketry and cannon announced the commencement of an action at the outpost, and Lord Chewton soon afterwards delivered Earl Cornwallis's orders for the cavalry and mounted infantry to repair with expedition to the army who were already moving to the relief of Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe. . . . The loss in this affair was nearly equal, except that the British took some prisoners, upwards of thirty being killed and wounded on each side."[2]

La Fayette's account of the action, written to Governor Nelson of Virginia,[3] is as follows:

"Col. Simcoe was so lucky as to avoid a part of the stroke; but, altho' the whole of the light corps could not arrive in time, some of them did. Majr Macpherson, having taken up fifty light infantry behind fifty dragoons, overtook Simcoe; and, regardless of numbers, made an immediate charge. He was supported by the riflemen who behaved most gallantly and did great execution. The alarm guns were fired at Williamsburg (only six miles distant from the field). A detachment just then going to Glocester was recalled, and the whole British army came out to save Simcoe. They retired next morning when our army got within striking distance.

"Our loss is 2 captns, 2 lieutenants, 10 privates, wounded; 2 Lieuts, 1 sergeant, 6 privates, killed; one Lieut, 12 privates whose

[1] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 300.

[2] Ibid., pp. 301–302.

[3] From "Mr. Tyree's Plantation, 20 miles from Williamsburg," 28th June, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

fate is not known; 1 sergeant taken. The enemy had about 60 killed, among whom are several officers, and about one hundred wounded. They acknowledge the action was smart, and Lord Cornwallis was heard to express himself vehemently upon the disproportion between his and our killed, which must be attributed to the great skill of our riflemen.

"This little success has given great satisfaction to the troops, and increased their ardor. I have put all the riflemen under Campbell. To-morrow I intend to reconnoitre a position below Bend's ordinary. Your return to Richmond and this little affair, will particularly mark his Lordship's retreat, and the recovery of every part of this State not under naval protection."

Lord Cornwallis had now substantially abandoned the conquest of Virginia. He was moving toward the coast with a view of providing for his own safety,—to which elementary principle he had returned after having performed with his army an exhausting march, which Dr. Gordon estimates to have been eleven hundred miles, without counting the deviations, from the time he left Charleston until he arrived at Williamsburg. And as he approached the sea, whence he hoped to obtain reinforcements which would enable him to renew his operations with a better prospect of success, he was unable to announce, in spite of all this labor, that he had accomplished anything of value to the cause of Great Britain in this campaign.[1]

[1] See Lord Cornwallis's Report to Sir Henry Clinton, from Williamsburg, 30th June, 1781.

A letter from "A Gentleman in the Marquis de La Fayette's army," dated July 4th, 1781, published in *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, Tuesday, July 17th, 1781, says, "His Lordship is now in Williamsburg. His single tour to Virginia has cost his King more money, by the loss of Forts, men, cannon, stores, magazines, and supposed Carolina territory, than it would have cost the whole nobility of England to have made the tour of the world. His Lordship has had a most fatiguing march to the Point of Fork, and back again. The Marquis was to him what Fabius was to Hannibal. Before Wayne made his junction he never lost sight of his Lordship, and when the junction was formed, by the single manœuvre of opening a march through a wood, which intersected his Lordship, preserved the stores at old Albemarle Court-House, which the enemy had principally in view."

In the mean time, La Fayette reported to General Washington, on the 28th of June,[1]—

"The ennemy have been so kind as to retire before us. Twice I gave them a chance of fighting (taking care not to engage further than I pleased), but they continued their retrograde motions. Our numbers are, I think, exaggerated to them, and our seeming boldness confirms the opinion.

"I thought at first Lord Cornwallis wanted to get me as low down as possible and use his cavalry to advantage. But it appears he does not as yet come out, and our position will admit of partial affairs. His lordship had (Exclusive of the reinforcement from Portsmouth, said to be 600) 4000 men, 800 of whom dragoons or mounted infantry. Our force is about equal to his, but only 1500 regulars and 50 dragoons. Our little action more particularly marks the retreat of the ennemy. From the place he first began to retire to Williamsburg is upwards of 100 miles. The old arms at the Point of Fork have been taken out of the water; the cannon has been thrown in the river undamaged when they marched back to Richmond; so that his Lordship did us no harm of any consequence. He lost an immense part of his former conquests and did not make any in this State. General Greene demanded of me only to hold my ground in Virginia; but the movements of Lord Cornwallis may answer better purposes than that in the political line.

"Adieu, my dear General; I do not know but what we will in our turn become the pursuing ennemy."

La Fayette was constantly hampered by the weakness of his cavalry, and he was anxious to increase its number by even one hundred men, who should serve for not less than two months from the time of joining him: such a force, he declared, might render essential service. There was, of course, great difficulty in providing cavalrymen with arms, even after he had them in his service, especially with swords, which were not to be obtained in Virginia; but he needed these men so much that he determined, if swords could not be procured in some way, to arm them

[1] Washington Papers, Department of State; La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 418.

with spears, "which," said he, "in the hands of gentlemen, must be a formidable weapon;"[1] and he declared that if he had accoutrements he should soon have two hundred men whom Colonel White had in readiness. His statement of the number of troops in his command, made to General Washington,[2] is that "The light infantry are 850, the Pennsylvanians about 600. Virginia exchanged soldiers and new levies, 400—the Marylanders will be 600. We have 120 dragoons and a chance to obtain 60 more. . . . As to militia, we may in a few days have 3000." He adds, however, that "Heavy artillery and everything relative to a siege, from the cannon to the tool, are not to be found this side of Philadelphia; cloathing and particularly shoes, arms, dragoon and horse equipments, ammunition of every kind are articles which your Excellency will be obliged to send from the northward. I may add medicines and hospital stores. . . . In case important operations are carried on in Virginia, which I think cannot fail to succeed, Mr. Morriss ought to send some hard monney. From the moment I took the command of this army, there has not been a farthing sent from the treasury, and this State monney is good for nothing."

New difficulties now arose, which not only increased the labor of enlisting the militia, whom La Fayette earnestly desired to have called out, but also rendered it impossible to keep in the field many of those who were already there. The expiration of their terms of service and the presence of disease in some parts of Virginia made the militia restless; but the great source of disturbance was the approach of harvest time, when every farmer was anxious to stay at home, and when those who

[1] To Governor Nelson, from "Holt's house," 28th June, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[2] From Mattapony River, 24th June, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

were away from home were anxious to return. La Fayette said to Governor Nelson,[1]—

"By the utmost care to avoid infected grounds, we have hitherto got clear of the smallpox. I wish the harvest time might be as easily got over. But there is no keeping the militia into the field; the three Brigades are so amazingly reduced that to have them of a tolerable strength I have been obliged to put them into two. They are commanded by Generals Stevens and Lawson, whom I have requested to have returns made by Counties and to forward them to Your Excellency.

"Many and many are daily deserting. But it is next to impossibility to take them in their flight through the woods. . . . They have no reason to complain, they cannot even conceive any, but say they were only engaged for six weeks and the harvest time recalls them home. On the other hand, the times of a great number are daily expiring. No relief comes to them, and you might as well stop the flood tide as to stop militia whose times are out."

But, in accordance with the policy by which he had wearied the British army in this Virginia campaign and yet held the field, in spite of his inferiority, he adds, "Under these circumstances it would perhaps be better to go and fight Lord Cornwallis. But, exclusive of my daily expectation of General Morgan, however disappointed I may have been as to his strength, exclusive of the diminution of force I have already experienced, I confidentially will confess with you that I am terrified at the consequences of a general defeat."

He had in mind the question of a mediation upon the part of the Empress of Russia and the Emperor of Germany to secure a peace between Great Britain and the United States, which seemed likely then to put an end to the war,[2] and which he knew to be at that moment

[1] From Tyree's Plantation, 1st July, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[2] See "Instructions to the Honourable John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson, Ministers Plenipotentiary in behalf of the United States to negotiate a Treaty of Peace,"—Secret Journal of Congress, June 15th, 1781, and Diplomatic Correspondence, Wharton, iv. 504.

attracting the attention of the great Powers of Europe; and, with the devotion to the cause of this country which always influenced his conduct, he was anxious to present the case of America with as great force and to as great advantage as possible, if a treaty of peace should become the subject of diplomatic negotiation. A victory over the British would, no doubt, have strengthened the claims of America in that event; on the other hand, a defeat of La Fayette's army in Virginia might have been seriously damaging in its effect upon questions of such grave importance. He continued in this letter, therefore, "You are not stranger to the political state of Europe. Everything bears for the present a tolerable face;—New York threatened, Carolina reconquered, Lord Cornwallis pushed into Williamsburg after a long retreat; such is the situation of affairs in America that may be laid before Mediators. But should we be beat, and should the loss of Virginia follow a defeat, new obstacles will be raised against American Independency."

The position which La Fayette had taken up on the 28th of June was at Tyree's Plantation, to the northwest of Williamsburg: he remained there during the last days of June and the first few days of July, keeping, in the mean time, his patrols and advanced guard well forward, to watch the retreat of the British army. This service kept his men constantly upon the alert; and in the case of those upon picket duty it was extremely difficult, from the lack of correct information as to the enemy's position and the fatigue of marching and countermarching. Captain Davis's entries record this part of the campaign as follows:

June "27th. This day we lay at Birds Ornary, I mounted guard, a wet night.—28th Clear morning, made some movements for advantage of ground. 29th—Manoeuvr'd considerably in this Cuntry, in consequence of Bad information. 30th—Extreamly Fatigued; lay by greater part of this day. Our tents brought to

us in the Evening. July 1st, *Sunday, Col'l Bassett's, York River.*— March'd at daybreak 8 miles to York River where we encamped, return'd that night to our former post. 2d March'd down to Birds Ornary, returned that night to our post. 3rd March'd Sunrise to some Body's old fild. Meaneuvers retrograde, and many troops wore out; hot weather."

On the following day the army united in celebrating the Declaration of Independence, almost in the face of the enemy:

"4th A wet morning, clear'd off 10 o clock. This day we had a Fudejoy in celebration of the Independence of America. After that was over, Penn'a Line perform'd several maneuveres, in which we fir'd."

At this time the American army was disposed as follows: General Campbell with his advanced brigade of Virginia militia was near Byrd's Ordinary, about sixteen miles from Williamsburg; Colonel Christian Febiger, with his detachment of a little over four hundred troops, of the 2d regiment of Virginia regulars, was about four miles in the rear of Campbell; General Wayne and General Muhlenberg, with their united forces of some fifteen hundred regulars, were one mile and a half farther back; whilst still farther to the rear were stationed General Stevens's and General Lawson's brigades of fourteen hundred militia; with these latter was the artillery, which consisted of five pieces.[1]

Colonel Febiger states the force of La Fayette's army on the 3d of July as follows:

"Campbell's advanced brigade .	780	militia.
Wayne's brigade	750	regulars.
Muhlenberg's	800	do.
Stevens' brigade	650	militia.
Lawson's brigade	750	do.
Febiger's regiment	425	regulars, best.
	4155	

[1] Colonel Febiger to Colonel Theodorick Bland, 3d July, 1781: Bland Papers, ii. 71.

or,

Regular infantry	1975	
Do. cavalry	50	
Do. artillery	300	
Total regulars	2325	
Militia, infantry . . .	2180	
Do. cavalry	60	very bad
	4565	is about our strength;

with these we have to oppose an enemy at least equal in numbers, and certainly superior with respect to discipline."

La Fayette's army had not been concentrated within so small a district for several weeks; for Colonel Febiger says, "In short, we have not been collected since we left Dandridge's, until this morning" (3d of July); and he added that the Marquis was fond of enterprise and had repeatedly detached his army, apparently with a view of bringing the enemy to action, "yet his lordship has not thought proper to attack; though to my knowledge he has had it in his power several times, and to advantage."

During this time, Lord Cornwallis, whose army was now encamped at Williamsburg, had received news from New York which changed his purpose of occupying his present position for an indefinite time and caused him to put his troops in motion again on the 4th of July. Sir Henry Clinton had sent a despatch to him in which he expressed great uneasiness as to the security of the post at New York, because, from intelligence which had recently come into his hands, he feared that General Washington was planning an attack upon that place in conjunction with the allied forces of the French commanders. The number of British troops then remaining in the garrison at New York, after the large detachments sent out at various times under General Leslie, General Phillips, and Arnold, did not exceed eleven thousand effective men, and as General Clinton believed that the combined forces of the allies would far outnumber him in the event of a

siege, he considered himself in imminent danger. He ordered Lord Cornwallis, therefore, to take a defensive station, in any healthy situation he might select (either at Williamsburg or at Yorktown), as soon as he should have finished such active operations as he might at that moment be engaged in; and thereupon, after reserving such troops as he might judge necessary for an ample defensive and for desultory movements by water in interrupting the American communications and in destroying magazines, to send forward to New York, as soon as possible, two battalions of light infantry, the 43d regiment, the 76th or the 80th regiment, two battalions of Anspach, the Queen's Rangers, the detachment of the 17th Light Dragoons, and as much of the artillery as could be spared.[1]

Upon receipt of these instructions, which changed his whole attitude in Virginia, Lord Cornwallis took immediate steps to comply with them; and, as he had terminated, upon his arrival at Williamsburg, all the active operations which he had undertaken, he was prepared to move at once. Having decided to abandon Williamsburg, therefore, and to proceed with his whole force to Portsmouth, whence he could embark for New York the troops called for by Sir Henry Clinton, and where he should then intrench himself to await future developments, Lord Cornwallis moved out from Williamsburg to the James River on the 4th of July. He encamped in front of the ford leading to James Island, sending across the river, in the mean time, the Queen's Rangers, who arrived safely upon the southern bank, at Cobham, that night. On the 5th he sent over all his baggage, intending to cross with the main body of his army on the 7th.[2]

Whilst these events were taking place, information of

[1] Sir Henry Clinton to Earl Cornwallis, from New York, 11th June, 1781.
[2] Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, from Cobham, 8th July, 1781.

the movement in the British camp was brought to the Marquis de La Fayette, with the intelligence that the enemy were marching toward Jamestown and were preparing to throw their baggage and troops over the river; whereupon he decided to make a forward movement with the Continental troops to Chickahominy Church, eight miles from Jamestown.[1] Accordingly, he advanced his army to Byrd's Tavern on the morning of the 5th of July, and sent a detachment to take post at Norrell's Mill, near Chickahominy Church, a short distance from the British camp.[2]

This was his position on the 6th of July, when an encounter took place between his troops and the British army which was the most serious incident of La Fayette's campaign, and which threatened him at one moment with far more damaging losses than he actually sustained; though it is not likely that he was in such imminent peril as some of the British historians appear to have believed, particularly Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, who confidently declares that La Fayette could not have escaped if Earl Cornwallis had decided to follow up the action by moving out upon him with the whole British force.[3]

This engagement is known as the battle of Green Spring, from the name of a plantation called the Green Spring Farm, where the action took place, upon the highway from Williamsburg to Jamestown, a mile, perhaps, from the north bank of the James River, opposite the northern end of Jamestown Island, at which point, as we have seen, the British army was encamped on the 5th of July.

The ground at the Green Spring Farm was low and

[1] Wayne's Report to General Washington: Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution, iii. 347.

[2] La Fayette to General Greene, from Ambler's Plantation, opposite James Island, 18th July, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

[3] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 355.

marshy toward the south, and was passable only by a narrow causeway, which made it troublesome to manœuvre a large body of troops. Lord Cornwallis conjectured from La Fayette's movements, of which, owing to the close proximity of the two armies, he received immediate intelligence, that it was the purpose of La Fayette to attack his rear as he crossed the river; and the prominent feature of this engagement resulted from that conception, because, while La Fayette did indeed intend to attack the British, and Lord Cornwallis prepared himself for such a movement, the latter did everything in his power to lead La Fayette into an ambuscade by making him believe that all the British troops had passed the river except a small covering party,—though in fact Cornwallis had held back his whole army except the Queen's Rangers, and had disposed of his force in such a manner that it was concealed from the observation of La Fayette's advanced guard.

Into this trap the British commander expected to draw the Americans, whom he intended to annihilate at one blow after he should have them in his power. He disposed his outposts in a position where they would most likely be mistaken for a small force guarding his rear, and lay with his main body under arms, ready for the attack. Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton went so far, in carrying out this stratagem, as to send false information into the camp of La Fayette, despatching thither a negro and a dragoon, to whom he "gave money and encouraging promises, to communicate false intelligence, under the appearance of deserters."[1] They were directed to inform the Americans that only the British Legion, with a detachment of infantry, composed the rear-guard, the body of the King's troops having passed James River.

The position of the British was both strong and well

[1] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 353.

suited to their purposes. Their right was covered by ponds, their centre and left were protected by marshes over which a few narrow causeways connected it with the adjoining country, and James Island lay in their rear.

General Wayne says in his report of this affair that on the morning of the 6th of July "several corroborating advices arrived" at the American camp which removed every doubt that the British intended to cross the James River, and gave the assurance that nothing but a forced march, with the lightest and most advanced part of the troops, could enable the Americans to overtake them in time to affect their rear.[1] This was the very impression Cornwallis had intended to convey. La Fayette acted upon it, though without the precipitation which the British had hoped for: he moved cautiously through the whole day, as we shall see, whilst he acted with the promptness which becomes an energetic commander who finds himself in a situation promising advantage to his troops.

His first move was to throw forward an advanced detachment of about five hundred men, in order to overtake the enemy and to reconnoitre their position, whilst he should come up afterward, in support, with the main body of his army. This advanced detachment he placed under the orders of General Wayne. It was composed of Major MacPherson's cavalry legion, two small corps of volunteer dragoons under Colonel Mercer and Captain Hill, one hundred and fifty riflemen, and Colonel Stewart's detachment of the Pennsylvania Line, with three pieces of artillery.

Wayne advanced with this body of troops as far as the Green Spring Farm. He came there upon the British outposts, whom he attacked early in the afternoon and drove back over one of the causeways upon his right,

[1] Wayne's Report, *ubi supra*.

wounding the commander, Lieutenant Grier.[1] These outposts, which consisted of light bodies of cavalry, having thus been forced back, the pickets of the enemy were discovered a short distance behind, and were attacked with an effective fire by some of Wayne's riflemen, about four o'clock in the afternoon. Although this attack upon the British pickets was very destructive, besides causing the death of three British officers who were successively assigned to the command of the post, Lord Cornwallis did not stir with his army, because he believed the American force then engaged to be too inconsiderable for him to disclose his attitude, and he hoped that by remaining quietly where he was he might draw La Fayette still farther on. Therefore he "suffered his pickets to be insulted and driven back;" for, he said, "concluding that the enemy would not bring a considerable force within our reach, unless they supposed that nothing was left but a rear guard, I took every means to convince them of my weakness."[2]

At this time, whilst the riflemen were assaulting the British pickets, La Fayette came upon the scene, to examine the ground and to learn what progress was being made by the advanced detachment, taking the precaution, however, to station two of his Continental light infantry battalions, under Colonel Vose and Colonel Barber, about half a mile in the rear of General Wayne's position. By this arrangement he held within reach the very best of his veteran troops, ready to advance in case the enemy should fall back, or to support Wayne if the enemy should prove too strong. It was this caution upon the part of La Fayette that saved the gallant and impetuous Wayne from destruction and frustrated the purpose of Lord Cornwallis to capture the American army.

It must be borne in mind that, while La Fayette had

[1] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 353.

[2] Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, from Cobham, 8th July, 1781.

allowed the British outposts to be attacked by the few volunteer dragoons in his army, and by the other light parties of Mercer and Hill, he had given Wayne's detachment substantial fighting qualities by including in it the Continentals of the Pennsylvania Line, and that "by a rapid move" he had brought within easy reach his own light infantry, who, as well as the Pennsylvanians, were unquestionably as good soldiers in every particular as any in the British service. He left his militia, under General Lawson, in the rear; and he tells us specifically that no militia were engaged in this action except the riflemen placed in advance in the wood. Therefore when Lord Cornwallis finally came out with his army he encountered a stubborn resistance, which he recognized at once as indicating the presence of veterans thoroughly able to contend with his own; and he did not continue the engagement upon the following day, having seen before nightfall on the 6th of July that he had failed in his effort to entrap La Fayette.

Meanwhile, upon coming to the front, toward the middle of the afternoon, whilst Wayne's riflemen were engaged with Cornwallis's pickets, La Fayette observed that the British showed an unusual obstinacy in covering their position and in replacing the officers in command who were picked off by the deadly fire from the American rifles. This aroused his suspicion that these pickets were kept there to conceal from him some intention of the enemy. Thereupon he determined to make a closer examination, in order to satisfy himself; although his own people were unanimously of opinion that there was nothing of the British army left upon that side of the river but a covering party to guard the rear.[1] Following the dictates of his own judgment in the matter, he rode forward alone to a point of land which extended

[1] Manuscrit No. 2, Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 273.

into the river, to the right of his position, whence he could observe the movements of the enemy. There he discovered that the British forces were posted upon an open piece of ground a short distance from the river bank, at, or near, Ambler's Plantation, under protection of the batteries upon their ships, and evidently awaiting his attack. The situation instantly became clear to him.

He hastened back to communicate this discovery to General Wayne; but when he arrived he found Wayne engaged, and that the battle had begun. During La Fayette's absence, the sight of a British cannon purposely left by the enemy in an exposed position tempted Wayne to make a dash forward to capture it, and he had sent out for that purpose Major Galvan, a French officer of the Continental army, with a small detachment of light infantry. This was the signal for the British advance. Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton says, "Upon the first cannon shot from the enemy, the British army formed and advanced, when the dragoons[1] fell back through the intervals made for them by the infantry."[2] General Wayne's narrative says, "The Marquis, anxious to view them near, had proceeded rather far upon their left. It was therefore thought proper to order Major Galvan, at the head of the advanced guard, to meet and attack their front; who, after a spirited though unequal contest, retired upon our left."[3] Lord Cornwallis states it from his side as follows: "I then put the troops under arms, and ordered the army to advance in two lines. The attack was began by the first line with great spirit. There being nothing but militia opposed to the light infantry, the action was soon over on the right. But Lieutenant-colonel Dundas' brigade, consisting of the 43d, 76th, and 80th regiments, which formed the left wing,

[1] British.
[2] Tarleton's Campaign, p. 353.
[3] Wayne's Report, *ut supra*.

meeting the Pennsylvania line, and a detachment of the Marquis de La Fayette's continentals, with two six-pounders, a smart action ensued for some minutes, when the enemy gave way and abandoned their cannon."[1]

Lord Cornwallis was misinformed as to the presence of militia upon his right. The attack at that point was made by the small force under Major Galvan, which, as we have seen, was soon forced back by the British, who began to turn Wayne's left flank. At this critical moment, Major Willis, coming with a detachment of the Continental light infantry to Wayne's assistance, commenced a severe fire upon the British left wing; whereupon the British 76th, 43d, and 80th regiments advanced with such vigor that Willis was forced back and the American right wing was being rapidly turned.

Wayne's position was growing desperate, when, having been reinforced by Lieutenant-Colonel Harmer and Major Edwards, with two detachments of the second and third battalions of Pennsylvanians under Colonel Humpton, who now came up, he determined upon a brilliant exploit, which required all the daring of his nature to conceive: this was, as he quaintly puts it himself, "among a choice of difficulties, to advance and charge them."[2] Almost surrounded as he was, he executed this movement with characteristic gallantry, charging directly into the midst of the British ranks; and by it he both extricated himself and saved the day. This unexpected assault checked for an instant the advance of the British, whilst it diverted their attention from the flanking movement against Wayne which was already begun. It gave Wayne a moment in which to collect himself, and an opportunity to obey the order sent him by the Marquis de La Fayette to fall back upon Vose's and Barber's light infantry, stationed, as has been said, about half a mile to the rear.

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, 8th July, 1781.

[2] Wayne's Report, *ut supra*.

He had to leave two of his cannon, because the horses had been shot, so that he could not drag them, and they fell into the hands of the enemy.

Wayne retired in good order to the position of the light infantry, bringing off all his wagons and his ammunition in safety. The British contented themselves with keeping the battle-field. They made no attempt to follow, although their cavalry had been drawn up ready to charge; they returned to their camp, and Lord Cornwallis crossed with his army to James Island, and thence to Cobham, upon the south side of the James River, during the night.[1] La Fayette concentrated at Norrell's Mill both the Continentals and the militia, which latter General Lawson had moved forward for that purpose.

The chief danger of La Fayette's position, after the engagement, lay in the superiority of the British cavalry, who, if they had been thrown forward upon him immediately, would, without doubt, have done him serious damage. But the darkness of the night favored him, and he gave it afterward as his opinion that, when Lord Cornwallis saw that he had united his Continentals by bringing up his light infantry at Norrell's Mill, the British commander was afraid to advance, lest he in turn should fall into an ambuscade, and therefore he declined a further contest.[2]

The Marquis de La Fayette's account of the battle of Green Spring, which he wrote to General Greene from "Ambler's Plantation, opposite Jamestown," on the 8th of July, 1781, is as follows:[3]

"On the 4th inst. the enemy evacuated Williamsburg where some stores fell into our hands, and retired to this place under the cannon of their shipping. Next morning we advanced to

[1] Tarleton says, however, that the rear-guard did not embark until twenty-four hours after the action. (Campaigns, p. 357.)

[2] Manuscrit No. 2, *ut supra*.

[3] La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 525.

Bird's tavern, and a part of the army took post at Norrel's Mill, about nine miles from the British Camp.

"The 6th I detached an advanced corps under Gen. Wayne with a view of reconnoitering the enemy's situation. Their light parties being drawn in, the pickets which lay close to their encampment were gallantly attacked by some riflemen whose skill was employed to great effect.

"Having ascertained that Lord Cornwallis had sent off his baggage under a proper escort and posted his army in an open field fortified by the shipping, I returned to the detachment which I found more generally engaged. A piece of cannon had been attempted by the van-guard under Major Galvan, whose conduct deserves high applause.—Upon this, the whole British army came out and advanced to the thin wood occupied by General Wayne.—His corps, chiefly composed of Pennsylvanians and some light infantry, did not exceed eight hundred men with three field pieces. But, notwithstanding their numbers, at sight of the British, the troops ran to the rencontre. A short skirmish ensued, with a close, warm, and well directed firing, but as the enemy's right and left of course greatly outflanked ours, I sent General Wayne orders to retire half a mile to where Col. Vose's and Col. Barber's light infantry battalions had arrived by a rapid move, and where I directed them to form. In this position they remained till some hours in the night. The militia under Gen. Lawson had been advanced, and the continentals were at Norrel's Mill when the enemy retreated during the night to James Island, which they also evacuated, crossing over to the south side of the river. Their ground at this place and the island were successively occupied by General Muhlenberg. Many valuable horses were left on their retreat.

"From every account, the enemy's loss has been very great and much pains taken to conceal it. Their light infantry, the brigade of guards and two British regiments formed the first line, the remainder of the army the second; the cavalry were drawn up but did not charge.

"By the inclosed return you will see what part of General Wayne's detachment suffered most. The services rendered by the officers make me happy to think that, altho' many were wounded, we lost none. Most of the field officers had their horses killed, and the same accident to every horse of two field pieces made it impossible to move them, unless men were sacrificed. But it is enough for the glory of General Wayne, and the officers and men he commanded, to have attacked the whole British army

with a reconnoitering party only, close to their encampment, and by this severe skirmish hastened their retreat over the river.

"Colonel Bowyer, of the riflemen, is a prisoner."[1]

Considerable importance has been attached by historians to this affair, largely, no doubt, because of the positive assertions of Tarleton that upon the British side it had not been accorded the attention it deserved, and that an opportunity was lost which, if it had been improved, must have changed the course of military affairs in Virginia in 1781. That officer asserted that the American army lay open to an attack on the night of the 6th of July, which could easily have been made, to its total destruction; "annihilation," indeed, is the ex-

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[1] RETURN of the killed, wounded, and missing of the detachment commanded by General Wayne, in a skirmish with the British army near the Green Springs, in Virginia, July 6, 1781.

Major Galvan's advanced guard. Killed, 4 rank and file; wounded, 1 sergeant, 7 rank and file.

Col. Stewart's detacht. Pennsylvan. Killed, 11 rank and file; wounded, 2 Capts. 3 Lieuts. 4 sergeants, 30 rank and file.

Col. Butler's ditto. Killed, 2 sergeants, 4 rank and file; wounded, 15 rank and file; missing, 9 rank and file.

Col. Humpton's ditto. Killed, 1 sergeant, 4 rank and file; wounded, 3 Capts. 1 Lieut. 1 sergeant, 19 rank and file.

Major Willes's ditto, of light infantry. Killed, 1 sergeant, 1 rank and file; wounded, 7 rank and file.

Capt. Ogden's company of McPherson's legion. Wounded, 2 rank and file.

Capts. Savage and Duffy's artillery. Wounded, 1 Capt.-Lieut., 1 sergeant, 2 rank and file; missing, 3 rank and file.

Total, 5 Captains, 1 Captain-Lieutenant, 4 Lieutenants, 7 sergeants, and 82 rank and file wounded; 4 sergeants, 24 rank and file killed; 12 rank and file missing.

NAMES of the OFFICERS wounded.

Captains. Van Lear, Division Inspector; Doyle, Finney, Montgomery, Stake, McClellan.

Lieutenants. Piercy, Feltman, White, Herbert, taken prisoner Capt.-Lieut. Crossley, of artillery.

N.B. A few riflemen were wounded, the number not ascertained.

WM. BARBER, Maj. and D.A.G.

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CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

pression he employed to describe the result as it presented itself to his mind. Some of the writers, influenced, unconsciously perhaps, by a criticism intended to discredit Earl Cornwallis and not La Fayette, and made by Tarleton whilst he was still smarting under the mortification of the defeat at Yorktown, have declared that La Fayette committed a grave military error at Green Spring, through which he placed his army in imminent peril, just as Tarleton said he did.

It is to be taken into account, however, that this assertion is not made from any definite statement of what the Marquis de La Fayette did, but is based upon the negative evidence as to what Lord Cornwallis did not do, and what it was supposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton that he might have done, if he had thought it judicious. It was doubtless a comparatively easy task for some of Earl Cornwallis's officers, after the event, to show what steps might have been taken by their commander, during his conduct of the Virginia campaign, in order to avoid the bitter humiliation which they all shared and for which perhaps they felt they were not responsible. Lord Cornwallis himself, however, whose military judgment certainly had the prestige of veteran experience, and whose skill has been admitted upon all sides as entitling him to high rank among British commanders, did not decide to avail himself of an opportunity for "such an exploit," which his fiery young dragoon afterward told his countrymen "would have been easy, fortunate, and glorious, and would have prevented the combination which produced the fall of Yorktown and Gloucester."[1]

But to examine the facts. La Fayette had not rashly attacked the whole British army. His move on the morning of the 6th of July was to send forward a reconnoitring party, which he made strong enough to protect

[1] Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 355.

itself, and intrusted to the leadership of a general officer. This of itself was an act of caution. He then disposed his army with great care, and, as the event proved, with good judgment; so that when Wayne fell back the well-disciplined Continentals were at hand to support him.

When La Fayette went to the front, in the afternoon, to examine his position, instead of throwing his men rashly into danger, he made a long détour to satisfy himself that all was well, before proceeding further. And it was during his absence upon this well-timed errand that General Wayne precipitated the action and drew down upon himself the weight of the whole British army. If that officer had halted until his commander returned, there would not have been any serious danger to the American troops; because La Fayette had discovered the British plot in the mean while, and there was still, from Lord Cornwallis's own testimony, ample time to make a retreat in good order.

General de La Fayette did not accuse Wayne of rashness in this affair; indeed, he always spoke of him with affection. He simply remarked, years afterward, in writing his memoirs, that he had "returned with all haste, but General Wayne had yielded to the temptation;" though "fortunately, upon discovering his mistake, he met the situation with courage; for he was a brave and a good officer."

Seeing, however, that the crisis had come, La Fayette displayed admirable coolness. He directed the movements of his troops in the front of the battle, without regard to his personal safety, until the moment arrived for him to order the retreat; and Wayne bore testimony to this in his official report. "Our Field-Officers were generally dismounted," said he, "by having their horses either killed or wounded under them. . . . I will not condole with the Marquis for the loss of two of his, as he was

frequently requested to keep at a greater distance. His native bravery rendered him deaf to the admonition."[1]

After the retreat to Norrell's Mill, and during the night of the 6th of July, La Fayette's army was in danger, or would have been so if the British had thrown forward their cavalry and had advanced upon him in force. Danger, however, was a constant element in his manœuvres before the British army throughout the Virginia campaign. That it may have been a little greater or a little less upon a given occasion is a mere incident; it would be futile to speculate what injury might have befallen him if events had been different, and it is but just to give him credit for what he did.

Upon this particular night, at all events, he was under no misapprehension as to the danger; for he had seen the British army himself and knew precisely what there was to guard against. He had his own time to prepare for what might come; and there was left him this advantage, that the greater part of his Continental troops, and all of Lawson's militia, had not been engaged. The evidence shows that he was perfectly alert and that his pickets were carefully watching the country; for Tarleton admits that when he was sent out with his dragoons, after daybreak on the following morning, upon the road beyond Green Spring by which the Americans had withdrawn, "they had not advanced four miles when they met a patrole of mounted riflemen." Tarleton's theory of the capture and destruction of the American army presupposed a body of troops who were worn out, defeated, and disheartened; which these men were not.

Upon the 8th of July, La Fayette issued the following general order, from Ambler's Plantation:[2]

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[1] Wayne's Report to General Washington: Sparks, Correspondence of the Revolution, iii. 350. La Fayette said his horse was not killed under him, but one was shot which was led at his side. (Mémoires historiques, i. 274.)

[2] Pennsylvania Gazette, 1st August, 1781.

"The General is happy in acknowledging the spirit of the detachment commanded by General Wayne in their engagement with the total British army, of which he happened to be an eye-witness. He requests General Wayne, the officers and men under his command, to receive his best thanks.

"The bravery and destructive fire of the riflemen engaged, rendered essential service.

"The brilliant conduct of Major Galvan and the Continental detachment under his command, entitle them to applause.

"The conduct of the Pennsylvania field and other officers are new instances of their gallantry and talents. The fire of the light infantry under Major Willis checked the enemy's progress round our right flank. The General was much pleased with the conduct of Captain Savage, of the Artillery, and it is with pleasure he also observes, that nothing but the loss of horses could have produced that of the two field pieces. The zeal of Colonel Mercer's little corps is handsomely expressed in the number of horses he had killed."

The behavior of La Fayette upon the occasion of this affair at Green Spring greatly enhanced his reputation in the Continental army, where his whole conduct of the Virginia campaign had attracted attention and won the approval both of the American and of the French officers. General de Rochambeau wrote to the War Department in France, "M. de la Fayette a mordu deux fois l'arrière-garde de Cornwallis avec des succès balancés. Il s'est en tout parfaitement bien conduit dans toute sa campagne de Virginie."[1] His merit was acknowledged also in the British camp; and Tarleton, in asserting that La Fayette had attacked the whole British army with a greatly inferior force, no doubt expressed the opinion of his brother officers and the general sentiment around him when he added that the step must have been prompted by "too great ardour, or false intelligence, which is most probable, for it is the only instance of this officer committing himself during a very difficult campaign."

[1] To the Marquis de Ségur, 26th July, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

After having united his army at Cobham, Lord Cornwallis detached Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, with his cavalry legion and a small force of mounted infantry, into Amelia County, to Prince Edward Court-House, and thence into Bedford County, to destroy whatever stores he could find there, having decided upon this further effort to cripple the Americans by employing such of his troops as he did not intend to embark for New York and whom he did not immediately require for garrison duty. Tarleton left Cobham upon this expedition on the 9th of July, whereupon Lord Cornwallis withdrew his whole remaining force to Portsmouth.

In the mean time the Marquis de La Fayette had occupied Williamsburg.[1] He now enjoyed, for the first time since he had come into the State of Virginia, a moment of comparative security and an opportunity to rest his men, who were worn out by constant marching and by daily and nightly alarms. He determined to occupy the high ground at Malvern Hill, which is healthy and well situated, in order to refresh his army, and at the same time to place himself in an advantageous position to watch the movements of the enemy and to move for the defence of Virginia either to the north or to the south. He wrote to Baron Steuben,[2] "I am happy that the North shore of James River is at length freed of the enemy. As soon as I am well ascertained of their motion I shall advise you. In my opinion it becomes every day more necessary to think seriously of supporting General Greene."

La Fayette had received information of Tarleton's expedition into Amelia County, though, as he was yet uncertain as to the purpose of the British commander in his retreat to Portsmouth, he could not decide whether Tarle-

[1] See his letter from there addressed to Congress on the 9th July, 1781: Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State.

[2] 10th July, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

ton was merely sent out to pillage, or whether this movement was intended to reinforce Lord Rawdon in the Carolinas. He concluded to take measures to defeat the latter undertaking if it should be attempted, and to be in readiness to assist General Greene if it proved that the British were contemplating an enterprise toward the south. He sent General Wayne, with his Pennsylvania Continentals and three hundred Virginia eighteen-months men, to the south side of the James, whither he also detached General Morgan with five hundred riflemen and some dragoons, to support Wayne. His purpose was to keep Wayne as well advanced as possible, so that in the event of the embarkation of the British troops for New York, of which he now had an intimation, the Pennsylvanians might move at once to strengthen the hand of General Greene. On the 15th of July he ordered General Wayne to take post at Goode's Bridge on the Appomattox River, whither General Morgan was also sent, as we see by a letter of La Fayette's of that date from Richmond to Wayne,[1] in which he says,—

"From the best intelligence I can get, the enemy's cavalry are gone very high up the country, either with a view to destroy some stores, or with the intention of gaining South Carolina. In either case, it becomes important that some troops be advanced further south which may manœuvre them lower down, or, should the cavalry reinforce Lord Rawdon, form a junction with General Greene.

"General Morgan, with the riflemen and what horse we can collect, will march to-morrow toward Goode's Bridge, from Westham where he will cross the river. . . . General Morgan, who precedes you to Goode's Bridge, will be able to inform you of the enemy's movements. Should a stroke at Col. Tarleton be found practicable, you have my permission to make it in conjunction with General Morgan. But, in case the enemy are going to the Southward, you will be so far on your way to Gen. Greene."

[1] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Tarleton's incursion resulted in no advantage to the British arms. After having marched through Petersburg to Prince Edward Court-House and from there toward the river Dan, he returned to the main army in about two weeks; and the stores destroyed by him, either of a public or of a private nature, were not in value equivalent to the damage sustained in the skirmishes on the route and in the loss of men and horses through the excessive heat of the climate.[1]

At this time La Fayette had begun to grow discontented in Virginia, which the British seemed to have deserted, and where active warfare appeared to have come to an end,—"homesick," as he said, to be back again at General Washington's head-quarters, near the Continental army, near the French troops, and near the combined operations at New York, about which he still dreamed in connection with the future greatness of America. It was not possible for him to imagine, in the dulness of his camp life at Malvern Hill, whence he could then discern no prospect of activity or of military operations in Virginia, that he was almost within sight of the ground upon which a great event was soon to occur, that he should take an active and honorable part in it, and that by this event the independence of the United States would be established.

In a rather despondent tone, he appealed to the Commander-in-Chief, not, as he said, in his official capacity, but as his "most intimate and confidential friend,"[2] to allow him to return to head-quarters.

"When I went to the Southward," he said, "you know I had some private objections, but I became sensible of the necessity there was for the detachment to go, and I know that, had I returned, there was nobody that could lead them on against their

[1] Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, p. 358.

[2] 20th July, 1781, from Malvern Hill, marked "Private": Washington Papers, Department of State.

inclination. My entering this State was happily marked by a service to the capital. Virginia became the grand object of the ennemy, as it was the point to which the Ministry tended.

"I had the honor to command an army and oppose Lord Cornwallis. When incomparably inferior to him, fortune was pleased to preserve us; when equal in numbers, tho' not in the kind of troops, we have also been pretty lucky.

"Cornwallis had the disgrace of a retreat and this State being recovered, government properly re-established, the ennemy are under protection of their works at Portsmouth, it appears an embarkation is taking place, probably destined to New York. The war in this State would then become a plundering one, and great manœuvres be out of the question,—a prudent officer would do our business here and the Baron is prudent to the utmost. Would it be possible, my dear General, that, in case a part of the British troops go to New York, I may be allowed to join the combined armies? I know the command of a separate army ought not to be quitted; but besides the services I may render in the co-operation, some arrangements, which I leave to your goodness for me to think of, may put me in a very brilliant station. . . . Lord Cornwallis is every day inquiring about my going to the grand army, which he says, must be soon the case. This induces me to think they believe you are in earnest in your preparations. . . . Should not a great part of the operating army in this quarter go to New York, I would not trouble you with my wishes to return to H^d^qrs. But do not, I pray, believe I have the least notion of calculating upon commands (tho' in my personal circumstances they become peculiarly important to me). If I may be of the least use to you, it will make me happy to serve as a volunteer Aid de Camp to you."

Events were rapidly moving, at that moment, in a direction which General Washington did not dare to point out too distinctly when he replied to La Fayette's request to be recalled. He went so far, however, as to intimate that there were circumstances under which important operations might be undertaken before long in the Southern States, in which event, aside from the fact that, if La Fayette were to return to head-quarters then, no command was available to which he could be appointed, he would be of greater service where he was,

and it would be far more to his advantage to stay there. Therefore the General, knowing that La Fayette would understand that he referred to the expected arrival of the French fleet from the West Indies, which had been agreed upon by the ministry in France in the early part of 1781, said, significantly, "Your penetration will point out my meaning, which I cannot venture to express in direct terms."[1]

Whilst La Fayette was fulfilling the duty which lay before him, he wrote to General Washington, from Malvern Hill, in a second letter upon the 20th of July, as follows:[2]

"MY DEAR GENERAL—No accounts from the Northward. No letter from Headquarters. I am utterly a stranger to everything that passes out of Virginia; and, Virginian operations being for the present in a state of languor, I have more time to think of my solitude. In a word, my dear General, I am homesick, and if I can't go to Headquarters wish at least to hear from there.

"I am anxious to know your opinion concerning the Virginia campaign. That the subjugation of this State was the great object with the Ministry, is an indisputable fact. I think your diversion has been of more use to the State than my manœuvres; but the latter have been much directed by political views. So long as my lord wished for an action, not one gun has been fired; the moment he declined it, we have been skirmishing. But I took care never to commit the army. His naval superiority, his superiority of horse, of regulars, his thousand advantages over us, were such that I am lucky enough to have come off safe. I had an eye upon European negotiations, and made it a point to give his Lordship the disgrace of a retreat."

To this General Washington replied in that tone of kindness which runs through all his correspondence with the youthful major-general, whom he loved and whose merits he rightly estimated, "You ask my opinion of the

[1] Private letter from Headquarters at Dobbs's Ferry, 30th July, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 119.

[2] Washington Papers, Department of State.

Virginia campaign. Be assured, my dear Marquis, your conduct meets my warmest approbation, as it must that of everybody. Should it ever be said, that my attachment to you betrayed me into partiality, you have only to appeal to facts to refute any such charge. But I trust there will be no occasion." [1]

La Fayette's active operations as an independent commander in Virginia were drawing to a close; indeed, they were practically ended then, so far as they related to field operations beyond the task of holding his own ground, of preparing the Virginia forces to assist in the defence of their State, and of watching the British, who soon afterward began to intrench themselves at Yorktown and Gloucester, which they were to leave only as prisoners of war. His services during the campaign had resulted in his holding undisputed possession of almost the whole State of Virginia; and this aid was of enormous value in the military combinations which followed, by which General Washington was enabled, with the French allied troops, to force the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. If the British army had occupied Virginia, with the consequent advantage of its numerous strategic positions, there could have been no Yorktown campaign. The French fleet would have been unable to assist America in Chesapeake Bay, because it would have found itself isolated there; and it is not in the least degree probable that General Washington would have marched to the South. The only hope of successful co-operation must then have lain in the direction of New York; and that, as we have seen in the case of the Comte d'Estaing, was extremely uncertain.

La Fayette had not conquered Lord Cornwallis, it is true; he had not outgeneralled him; nor had he driven him from the country. His small force would not have

[1] 30th July, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 118.

permitted anything of the kind. But he had manœuvred with such caution and such good judgment, through the country, back and forth across its innumerable rivers and smaller streams, annoying the enemy, keeping out of their way, harassing their rear, and yet preventing them from establishing themselves in Virginia, that Lord Cornwallis finally retired toward the coast with the intention of strengthening his army before undertaking "solid operations" with a view to ultimate conquest. Solid operations had been found by him to be necessary if he intended to take away the State of Virginia from the "boy" general of twenty-three who he had once thought could not escape him. In this respect La Fayette deserves full credit as a soldier, that, during a campaign which even his British opponents admitted to be a difficult one, he had made no serious mistakes. He had animated the Virginians to renewed efforts in the common cause by the influence of his own untiring energy and courage; he had protected their public stores and their private property; and, having kept his army intact, he barred the outlets, upon the land side, by which Lord Cornwallis might try to escape from the perilous situation in which he had placed himself at Yorktown.

How far the Marquis de La Fayette believed that he had contributed to the ultimate defeat of Lord Cornwallis is uncertain from anything that he ever said; though it is not probable that he imagined that the retreat of the British commander from Williamsburg to Portsmouth was due to the presence of his little army, since the embarkation of the British troops for New York made it evident that orders from Sir Henry Clinton governed the movements of Cornwallis at that time. La Fayette appears to have had some intimation of the lack of harmony between Clinton and Cornwallis which unquestionably embarrassed the latter at that period; because he wrote to General Washington, in this connection, "Lord Corn-

wallis, I am told, is much disappointed in his hopes of command. I cannot find out what he does with himself. Should he go to England, we are, I think, to rejoice for it. He is a bold and active man, two dangerous qualities in this Southern war."[1]

The important advantage which La Fayette hoped to obtain during the active portion of his campaign was to fasten upon Lord Cornwallis the "disgrace of a retreat" in the eyes of Europe, and thus enhance the claims of the United States in case of a negotiation for peace. He evidently did not expect to accomplish permanent military results against the British army with the inadequate force at his command. Subsequently, after the British withdrew to Yorktown, he tells us (though this was written years after the event), "It was at that point[2] that La Fayette passionately desired the British army to concentrate. This was the purpose of all his movements as soon as a slight increase of his force permitted him to think of anything except to retire without being destroyed, and to save the magazines."[3]

His situation in regard to the British movements at that time is described in his letter to General Washington, of the 20th of July, from Malvern Hill:

"So soon as he[4] had crossed, he improved the opportunity to send Tarleton into Amelia, but was disappointed in the stores which he expected to find and which had been previously removed. I thought at first the cavalry would join Rawdon, and detached Wayne and Morgan either to manœuvre Tarleton down or to determine his course. Upon this he retired with precipitation towards Portsmouth where the British army is for the present.

"From every account, it appears a part of the army will embark; the light infantry, the guards, the 80th Regt., the Queen's

[1] From Malvern Hill, 20th July, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] Yorktown.

[3] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 274.

[4] Cornwallis.

Rangers are, it is said, destined to New York. Of this I have sent accounts by water to Rhode Island, but question if the boats will arrive. . . . General Wayne's Pennsylvanians never exceeded about 700. Fighting and desertion have much reduced them. I have sent him to Goode's Bridge, upon Appomattox. He says the three Pennsylvania Battalions have been reduced to two,—about 250 each, fit for duty. To this I have added 300 Virginia new levies; General Morgan and 500 riflemen with some dragoons is also at Goode's Bridge to support Wayne. But the moment the embarkation sails, Morgan will return and the others proceed to Carolina. I have obtained from the Executive that 2000 militia be ordered to Boyd's ferry, upon Dan River. This force will give General Greene's a decided superiority. I am determined to reinforce him at my own risks. It is important for the treaty that Carolina be reconquered. The light infantry and whatever militia remains are encamped upon Malvern Hill, the most airy and healthy place this side of the mountains. I have a post at Sandy Point to examine the ennemy's movements. I shall have some militia in the vicinity of Williamsburg; the Gloucester County militia in their own County. Mr. Packer has some on the south side of James River. The few boats that remain are collected at Four Miles Creek. . . . Such is for the present our situation. I have endeavored to attend to the health and refreshment of our men, while I had parties to gain intelligence and prevent plunder. I have directed Packer's detachment, about 300 militia, to keep clear of danger from an attack. His own are from the adjacent counties to Suffolk. The Executive have promised I should in a little time have 5000 militia, let it be 4000 and the light infantry. In case 2000 were to go to New York, 600 must be kept as a garrison in Portsmouth, and the remainder, though we can't prevent their plundering, may be prevented from forming any establishment in the State, provided we can make up a body of cavalry, —the most difficult of all works in this country. Nothing but a treaty of alliance with the negroes can find out dragoon horses, and it is by those means the enemy have got a formidable cavalry. . . . The clothing you have long ago sent to the light infantry is not yet arrived. I have been obliged to send for it and expect it in a few days. These three battalions are the best troops that ever took the field. My confidence in them is unbounded. They are far superior to any British troops, and none will ever venture to meet them at equal numbers. What a pity these men are not employed along with the French grenadiers! They would do eternal honor to our arms. But their presence here, I must con-

fess, has saved this State, and indeed the Southern part of the Continent."

Again, upon the 26th of July, he wrote, from Malvern Hill, to the Commander-in-Chief,[1]—

"I had some days ago the honor to write to your Excellency and informed you that a detachment from the British army would probably embark at Portsmouth. The two battalions of light infantry and the Queen's Rangers were certainly, and the guards with one or two British regiments were likely to be, ordered upon that service. My conjectures have proved true, and 49 sails fallen down in Hampton Road, the departure of which I expect to hear every minute.

"A prisoner British officer lately mentioned Lord Cornwallis himself was going. However, I think General Leslie is the man who commands the embarked troops. Pottowmack and Chesapeak are the announced object. But I think the true destination is New York.

"I have directed men of observation to send me intelligence respecting the movements of the fleet. Horses will be ready upon the road and an officer sent the moment I hear of their sailing. Some days ago I communicated my conjectures to the French Admiral, but question if my letters could arrive safe.

"It appears the ennemy have some cavalry on board. The conquest of Virginia and the establishment of British power in this State having not succeeded to the expectations of the British Court, a lesser number might be sufficient to the present purposes, and two thousand men easily spared. So that I do not believe the present embarkation is under that number.

"So far as a land force can oppose naval operations and naval superiority, I think the position now occupied by the main body of our small army affords the best chance to support the several parts of Virginia.

"In his precipitate retreat from Amelia County, Colonel Tarleton suffered some loss from militia light parties."

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[1] Washington Papers, Department of State.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN—*Continued.*

THE fortunes of war began at length, after years of disappointment, of disheartening reverses, and of financial distress, to favor the Continental arms. The beginning of the year 1781 gave hope of success in the affairs of the Revolution against Great Britain; its close was to see American independence substantially won, and the United States established among the nations of the world.

Whilst the operations which we have been following with the Marquis de La Fayette through his campaign in Virginia were tending toward this result, events of great importance were taking place at the North, preparing the way for that combination of the allied forces of France and America which culminated in the glorious achievements of both in the Yorktown campaign.

The arrival at Newport, in the early part of May, of the Admiral Comte de Barras and the Vicomte de Rochambeau, who came with the announcement that the French Government had advanced considerable sums of money to aid in clothing and equipping the army of the United States, but had decided not to send any more ships to strengthen its squadron at Newport and not to forward the second division of the Comte de Rochambeau's detachment, led the French commanders to request another conference with General Washington.[1]

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[1] Admiral de Barras wrote to General Washington, from Newport, on the 11th of May, "I have the honor to announce to your Excellency my arrival at Boston, on the 6th of this month, in the frigate La Concorde, the King

General Washington replied by appointing the 21st of May as the date of the meeting, and Wethersfield, in Connecticut, as the place, whither he proceeded from his head-quarters at New Windsor, accompanied by General Knox and General du Portail. The Comte de Rochambeau arrived at the time appointed, with the Chevalier de Chastellux; M. de Barras was detained at Newport by the sudden appearance of some British ships of war off the harbor. The conference was held with due formality, and, as at the former conference between the Commander-in-Chief and the French generals at Newport, the propositions were presented in writing by the Comte de Rochambeau and the answers of General Washington placed opposite to these, each proposition being offset by the reply made to it, and from the whole of these the conclusion was made up. The subjects discussed were the disposition of the French fleet at Newport, its possible co-operation in the enterprises to be undertaken during the summer, the securing, at some point out of the enemy's reach, of the magazines and stores, the powder and the heavy siege-artillery, belonging to the detachment under the command of M. de Barras and General de Rochambeau, with various other matters of detail pertinent to the situation, and finally, what was of greatest importance, the arrangement for a junction of the French land forces with the main Continental army, with a view to active operations under General Washington.

This was the purpose which Washington earnestly desired to accomplish; because, as the enemy had evidently reduced their strength by the detachments they

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having appointed me to the command of his squadron in these seas. I arrived at this place yesterday. The Comte de Rochambeau has communicated to me the letter which he had the honor to write to your Excellency, requesting an interview. When he shall have received your answer we will conform to your decision. I am very anxious to have the honor of making your acquaintance, and assure you that I have nothing so much at heart as to render myself serviceable to the King and to the United States."

had recently sent to carry on the war in the South, their position seemed to offer an opportunity, especially if the French naval armament from the West Indies should arrive at a favorable moment, to make a successful attack upon New York, the stronghold of British operations in America. He had watched anxiously for the day to come when this should be possible. His most sanguine hopes were always centred in that undertaking; they influenced his plan of operation in the early part of 1781, and they decided the result of the conference at Wethersfield.

It was agreed that the French troops should join him, as soon as possible, upon the Hudson River, and that offensive operations should be undertaken against New York. The Comte de Rochambeau at once placed himself in accord with the views of the Commander-in-Chief and agreed to move his soldiers from their quarters at Newport to the Hudson. At the same time, his judgment was not in favor of an attempt upon New York, which he believed to be impracticable for heavy ships of war, on account of the shallowness of water upon the bar. His suggestion was, to operate with the fleet in Chesapeake Bay, and, by supporting La Fayette with the main army, to rescue the State of Virginia and the South from the hands of the British, who seemed to be advancing to a permanent establishment there. It was probably known at that time that Lord Cornwallis was marching from North Carolina to unite with General Phillips and Arnold in Virginia,[1] and that La Fayette was in extreme danger.

M. de Rochambeau's belief in the advisability of a movement in the direction of Virginia was strengthened at that moment by a package of despatches from Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, dated the 7th of

[1] This was certainly known to Rochambeau one week later. Rochambeau to Comte de Grasse, 28th May, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

February and the 7th of March, not in cipher, which had been captured by an American privateer and were sent to General Washington whilst he was at the conference of Wethersfield.[1] These showed that the purpose of the British ministry was to capture the Southern States, and after them the Middle States, in order to drive the Continental army to the eastern side of the Hudson River, and to confine it there until the country should be entirely recovered to the British dominion. Lord George Germain doubted not that Sir Henry Clinton would avail himself of Washington's weakness and his own superiority to send a considerable force to the head of the Chesapeake as soon as the season would permit operations to be carried on in that quarter, and he flattered himself that the Southern provinces would be recovered to his Majesty's obedience before the long-promised succors, none of which had yet sailed, could arrive from France, and that Mr. Washington, unable to draw subsistence for his troops from the west side of the Hudson River, would be compelled to cross it and take refuge in the Eastern provinces. It was the judgment of the Comte de Rochambeau that this plan of campaign should be defeated by counter-operations in the South; and General Washington appears to have agreed with him to the extent, at least, of considering the practicability of doing so if the French naval commander at Newport would unite in the undertaking and proceed with his fleet to Chesapeake Bay. A messenger was sent immediately to M. de Barras to inquire whether he would renew the attempt made by the Chevalier Des Touches; but the admiral replied that the British naval superiority was so great that he should not consider himself justified in undertaking an enterprise of that character with his present force.

This attitude of the Comte de Rochambeau at the

[1] Mémoires de Rochambeau, Paris, 1809, i. 278. See extracts from these despatches in Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 519.

conference of Wethersfield has led French historians to claim for him the credit of having first suggested the operations which resulted in the Yorktown campaign. The military combination of that enterprise was not, indeed, discussed in detail at Wethersfield; for the two essential elements of its ultimate success—to wit, the arrival of the French West India fleet under the Comte de Grasse, and the operations which Lord Cornwallis might undertake in Virginia after uniting with the army of General Phillips —were then unknown quantities in the problem. The subsequent military operations were, properly speaking, the outgrowth of what was done at Wethersfield.

It is not to be supposed, however, that General Washington had not considered the question of a Virginia campaign, or that the fate of his own State had not appealed to him through all the ties of attachment and of personal interest: his correspondence amply shows that he had in mind the question of operations at the South, but that the lack of naval support and of means of water transportation caused him to defer its consideration for the present.[1] His devotion to the cause of liberty throughout America led him to take the broad view that the whole country was his country, and that its interests were to be protected by him alike in every part, according to his resources and to the best means available.

In view of his comparatively small force, of the difficulty of raising more men in the different States, of the enormous labor of transporting his army from the Hudson River to the James by land, and of the loss, by desertion and otherwise, which experience had shown must be reckoned with, the operation against New York presented itself to his mind as the one step that was then

[1] See General Washington's letters, 23d May, to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, 24th May, to the President of New Hampshire, 27th May, to Congress, and 29th May, to John Sullivan: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 49, *et seq.*

practicable. If it should result successfully, it would probably end the war; and it was likely, in any event, to relieve the situation in Virginia, by forcing the British to recall a large part of their troops. His opinion prevailed in the conference, and the junction of the French troops with those of the Continental army was agreed to upon that basis, the proposition and the answer in relation to it being as follows:

"*M. de Rochambeau.*—If the fleet from the West Indies should arrive in these waters, an event which will probably be announced beforehand by a frigate, what operations will General Washington have in view, after a junction of the French troops with his own?

"*General Washington.*—The enemy, by several detachments from New York, having reduced their force at that post to less than one half of the number which they had at the time of the former conference at Hartford, in September last, it is thought advisable to form a junction of the French and American armies upon the North River, as soon as possible; and move down to the vicinity of New York, to be ready to take advantage of any opportunity which the weakness of the enemy may afford. Should the West India fleet arrive upon the coast, the force thus combined may either proceed in the operation against New York, or may be directed against the enemy in some other quarter, as circumstances shall dictate. The great waste of men, which we have found from experience in the long marches to the Southern States, the advanced season in which such a march must be commenced, and the difficulties and expense of land transportation thither, with other considerations too well known to Count de Rochambeau to need detailing, point out the preference, which an operation against New York seems to have in the present circumstances over an attempt to send a force to the Southward."

Besides complying with this proposition, General de Rochambeau promised to write to the Comte de Grasse acquainting him with the threatening condition of affairs in America and the necessity of immediate relief, specifying the military operations which might be undertaken against the British army if General Washington could

have the advantage of the Comte de Grasse's naval co-operation, and urging him to come to the United States with all the despatch that his orders from the King would admit of.

It was agreed that the French fleet should remain at Newport with a guard of four hundred regular French troops and of one thousand militia to be furnished by the State of Rhode Island,—a provision which M. de Barras at first declined to accept, upon the ground that his orders directed him to go to Boston in case the land forces should at any time be separated from him. But he acceded to it ultimately as the result of M. de Rochambeau's earnest expostulations and of the unanimous decision of a council of war held aboard the flag-ship to consider the question.

This compliance upon the part of M. de Barras was considered by the Comte de Rochambeau as a point of great importance in the events which led up to the campaign a little later; for it enabled the admiral afterward to move with rapidity, and with a facility which he employed to immense advantage by coming upon the scene in Chesapeake Bay at the very moment when his presence was indispensable; and M. de Rochambeau thought it by no means certain that he could have manœuvred his squadron with the same effect, on account of the disadvantage of the prevailing winds, if he had taken his station in Boston harbor.[1]

In spite of his own preference for a Southern campaign, General de Rochambeau proceeded loyally to carry out his agreement with General Washington with regard to the proposed attack upon New York. Curiously enough, he found that he had a critic at his elbow, in the person of one of his own officers, the Chevalier de Chastellux, who asserted that he was entitled to the credit of having brought M. de Rochambeau, after great difficulty in over-

[1] Mémoires de Rochambeau, i. 275.

coming the headstrong disposition of a man who always wanted to have his own way, to the acceptance of General Washington's views, and, altogether, to the proper way of thinking. By a singular accident, the letter in which M. de Chastellux thus freely expressed himself to M. de La Luzerne, with a view, no doubt, to magnifying at home the importance of his own services, fell into the hands of the British commander, who immediately sent a copy of it to General de Rochambeau; and, as the latter gravely remarks in his Mémoires, "ce n'étoit assurément pas dans le dessein de mettre la paix dans mon ménage." But, with a fine comprehension of the circumstances, and of human nature, the old general sent for Chastellux and showed him the letter, then "threw it into the fire and left him, a prey to his own remorseful feelings."

General Washington was uncertain as to the wisdom of allowing the French fleet to remain at Newport (its retiring to Boston having been agreed upon at Wethersfield); and when this plan was reported to him he expressed his preference for the original measure, leaving it entirely to the French commanders, however, to determine what would be best to do,—though in either event he urged that the march of the troops toward the Hudson should be hurried as much as possible. He had arrived at his head-quarters at New Windsor on the 25th of May; the Comte de Rochambeau had gone back to Newport, having left Wethersfield on the 23d.

General Washington's views upon the situation are clearly set forth in the letter which he wrote to M. de Rochambeau shortly afterward, directing the troops to be sent forward:[1] "The strides, which the enemy are making at the southward, demand a collection of our force in this quarter, that we may endeavour to commence our operation. I know of no measure, which will be so

[1] From New Windsor, 4th June, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 64.

likely to afford relief to the southern States, in so short a time, as a serious menace against New York. This your Excellency may remember was a principal inducement for our undertaking that operation, in preference to the other, which was spoken of; and I assure you the calls upon me from the southward are so pressing, that nothing but seeing our preparations against New York in some degree of forwardness will content them, or convince them that they are likely to derive any advantages from the force, which they see detained here." Urgent appeals had been sent from Virginia to General Washington to go there with his army to save the State.

Lord Cornwallis had effected his junction with General Phillips's detachment, against whom no resistance could be made except that of the small force under the Marquis de La Fayette, entirely unfit to attempt serious operations in the face of the British army; and cries for help were constantly reaching the ears of the Commander-in-Chief, to which he could give no direct response. La Fayette said to him, "Your presence would do immense good; but I would wish you to have a large force. General Washington, before he personally appears, must be strong enough to hope success."[1]

The situation seemed to the Commander-in-Chief to be "very alarming," not only as to the State of Virginia, but as to all the other States;[2] and he wrote again to M. de Rochambeau, on the 13th of June, "I am so fully convinced, that your Excellency will make no unnecessary delay in your march, that I have only occasion to repeat my former request, that it may be commenced as soon as circumstances will admit. My last accounts from the Marquis de Lafayette were of the 3d of June. The Brit-

[1] 3d June, 1781: La Fayette's Correspondence, American edition, i. 519.

[2] See General Washington's letter to Governor Jefferson, 8th June, 1781, in reply to one from the latter, dated 28th May: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 71.

ish army, in very considerable force, were then between Richmond and Fredericksburg; their destination was uncertain; but from their superiority they were at full liberty to go wherever they pleased." [1]

General de Rochambeau, who was waiting at Newport for the small reinforcement of men and the advances of money which had been sent to him from France under convoy of the King's man-of-war the Sagittaire when the West India fleet sailed from Brest, wrote to the Comte de Grasse a description in detail of the situation in America, mentioning General Washington's plans against New York, his own proposition that an expedition should be undertaken in Chesapeake Bay against the army of Cornwallis, the refusal of M. de Barras to entertain that proposition, and the number and size of the British vessels then in the waters of the United States; and he said to him,—

"Such is the condition of affairs and the gravity of the crisis in America, especially in the Southern States, at this moment. The arrival of M. le Comte de Grasse may save the country; for none of the means within our control can be made available without his co-operation and without the naval superiority which he can bring here.

"There are two points at which to act offensively against the enemy, the Chesapeake and New York. The southwest winds and the state of distress in Virginia will probably lead you to prefer Chesapeake Bay, and it is there that we believe you will be able to render the greatest service, especially since you will require but two days to come from there to New York. At all events, it will be important for you to send a frigate well in advance to inform M. le Comte de Barras and General Washington of the point at which you expect to land, in order that the former may join you and the latter may prepare his land forces to co-operate with you."

This letter was written at Newport, on the 28th of May, to be sent by the frigate La Concorde, which had been

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 75.

ordered to the West Indies for that purpose;[1] and on the 31st of the month, as the vessel had not yet sailed, the French general added a postscript begging the admiral to bring with him a corps of five or six thousand men of the French troops then stationed in the West Indies, with which, he said, "it would be useless to declare how great a service M. de Grasse would render;" he asked also for twelve hundred thousand livres in money for the campaign, because the French Government could obtain specie to much greater advantage in the West Indies, where exchange was at par, than in the United States, where there was at that time a premium of from twenty-eight to thirty per cent.

M. de Rochambeau plainly indicates that, whilst General Washington held tenaciously to his plan of attacking New York, under the existing circumstances, yet the moment he felt assured of a naval superiority he was ready to consider other enterprises which would then become feasible. For he said to the Comte de Grasse in reference to General Washington, "Il a requis M. le Comte de Barras de se porter avec le corps de troupes françaises dans la baie de Chesapeak. M. de Barras lui en a démontré l'impossibilité. Il a requis ensuite la marche du corps français à la rivière du Nord, pour, conjointement avec son armée, menacer et peut-être attaquer New-York, pour procurer une diversion aux Etats du Sud." This militates against M. de Rochambeau's exclusive claim for credit in suggesting the Yorktown campaign, because it admitted, only one week after the meeting at Wethersfield, that General Washington was prepared to co-operate in the South if the admiral landed there and provided the necessary naval support. Indeed, General Washington wrote to M. de Rochambeau on the 13th of June, in connection with this very letter, the tenor of

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

which had been communicated to him in general terms,[1] "Your Excellency will recollect, that New York was looked upon by us as the only practicable object under present circumstances; but should we be able to secure a naval superiority, we may perhaps find others more practicable and equally advisable. If the frigate should not have sailed, I wish you to explain this matter to the Count de Grasse; for, as I understand it, you have in your communication to him confined our views to New York alone. And, instead of advising him to run immediately into the Chesapeake, will it not be best to leave him to judge, from the information he may from time to time receive of the situation of the enemy's fleet upon this coast, which will be the most advantageous quarter for him to make his appearance in?"

But it is a matter of little consequence, at all events, whether M. de Rochambeau did or did not first propose the operations which led to the siege of Yorktown. The credit of that excellent soldier does not require the addition of so small a distinction to enhance his reputation, or to magnify the services performed by him and his brave compatriots in the War of Independence. It is certain that he came to the country's assistance at the moment of its greatest need, and that he devoted himself to its interests with a loyalty which deserves to be remembered forever. The French soldiers under Rochambeau made it possible to achieve the final victory which led to Cornwallis's surrender; for without them, as all Americans must admit with gratitude to France, the Yorktown campaign of 1781 could not have taken place.

The convoy of the Sagittaire having arrived at Boston on the 10th (except a part of it which had been scattered at sea), with six hundred and sixty new troops for M. de

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 76.

Rochambeau and the money sent to him from France,[1] the French detachment set out on the 18th of June, in four divisions, to join the Continental army upon the Hudson, and, after a march during which the discipline of the corps and the general conduct of the soldiers were conspicuously good, it reached North Castle on the 3d of July, having marched two hundred and twenty miles in eleven days[2] without losing a man.[3]

General Washington had established his head-quarters at Peekskill, whence he was meditating an attack against the British outposts upon York Island, and a surprise against a corps of light troops under Colonel Delancey at Morrisania. For the latter enterprise he designed the Duc de Lauzun's legion, which was approaching with the French troops, to operate in conjunction with General Waterbury's Connecticut State troops and Sheldon's regiment; for the former he detached General Lincoln with a corps of eight hundred men. Upon the 2d of July he sent Colonel Hull from Peekskill to meet the Comte de Rochambeau and explain to him the plan of intended operations; that officer was also directed to give the necessary instructions to the Duc de Lauzun relative to the part he was assigned to perform. General Washington said to M. de Rochambeau, "I think it will be very well for your Excellency to proceed to-morrow to North Castle, where you will continue until you assemble your whole force, unless you should hear from me within that time. Being at North Castle will put you in a direct route to receive your provisions from Crompond, and it will be in a direct way for your troops to advance to White Plains,

[1] M. de Rochambeau to General Washington, from Providence, 15th June, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

[2] Rochambeau to the Marquis de Ségur from White Plains, 8th July, 1781: Ibid.

[3] Except, as M. de Rochambeau wrote to Admiral de Barras, "dix amoureux de Soissonnais qui auront retourné voir leurs maîtresses à Newport et que je vous prie de faire rechercher." 8th July, 1781: Ibid.

or any other point below, as circumstances shall appear to demand."[1]

General Lincoln embarked his men on the night of the 1st of July, near Teller's Point, and dropped down the river before daylight upon the 2d, with instructions to reconnoitre the enemy's works at the upper end of York Island, to determine their strength and position, and to decide whether it was safe to attempt a surprise. In case he concluded not to make the attack, he was to land above Spuyten Duyvil and to cover the Duc de Lauzun in his operation against Delancey. At three o'clock on the morning of the 2d, General Washington moved from Peekskill with the Continental army, in order to cover the detached troops and to improve any advantages that might be gained by them.[2] He halted at the New Bridge over the Croton River, about nine miles from Peekskill, and again at Tarrytown, where he remained until dusk, and then took up the line of march for Valentine's Hill, arriving there at sunrise.

Both attempts failed, however; for General Lincoln, who had landed near the Harlem River, to prevent the retreat of Delancey by way of King's Bridge, was attacked by the enemy; and the Duc de Lauzun, after a forced march from Ridgebury, in Connecticut, came up only in time to find Lincoln's troops engaged, early in the morning of the 3d, whereupon he abandoned his original purpose and advanced to Lincoln's support. A skirmish ensued, during which the enemy retired to York Island, and the only immediate advantage obtained was an opportunity, of which General Washington availed himself, in company with General du Portail, to reconnoitre fully the British works upon the northern end of the island.[3]

[1] 2d July, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 93.

[2] Washington's Diary, 2d July, 1781.

[3] General Washington to Congress, 6th July, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 97.

On the 4th of July the Continental army marched to Dobbs's Ferry, where it took up a position in two lines, the right wing resting upon the Hudson River, and a camp was marked out for the French troops, in a single line, upon the hills to the left of that position, extending to the Bronx.

On the 4th, General Washington sent a despatch to the Comte de Rochambeau, who was still at North Castle, requesting him to give him notice of the approach of his detachment, in order "that he might have the happiness of meeting and conducting him to his camp," which, he informed him, would be about four miles from White Plains. General Washington visited the French army at North Castle on the following day; and on the 6th of July the junction of the two armies was made upon the grounds marked out.[1] The Commander-in-Chief issued an order in honor of the event, as follows:

"The Commander-in-chief with pleasure embraces the earliest public opportunity of expressing his thanks to his Excellency, the Count de Rochambeau, for the unremitting zeal with which he has prosecuted his march, in order to form the long wished for junction between the French and American forces; an event, which must afford the highest degree of pleasure to every friend of his country, and from which the happiest consequences are to be expected. The General entreats his Excellency, Count de Rochambeau, to convey to the officers and soldiers under his immediate command the grateful sense he entertains of the cheerfulness, with which they have performed so long and laborious a march at this hot season. The regiment of Saintonge is entitled to peculiar acknowledgments for the spirit, with which they continued and supported their march without one day's respite."[2]

Thus the union of the allied forces was finally accomplished. But the condition of affairs was so different from what General Washington had hoped for, and so far short of the anticipations entertained at the time of the

[1] General Washington's Diary.
[2] Orderly Book.

Wethersfield conference, that it was questionable whether any of the concerted plans could now be carried out, for want of a force sufficiently great to justify it. The situation was likely to become embarrassing, if, after the allies had obeyed the call to co-operate with the Continental army as an auxiliary force, that army should find itself so reduced as to be unfit to take the field. In the early part of the year, General Washington counted upon having at least fifteen thousand men under his command during the campaign of 1781; but the responses made by the several States to the requisitions for troops had been so dilatory that the total of Continental soldiers of every description under arms, including the garrisons at West Point and elsewhere, and those in Virginia with La Fayette, amounted to less than eight thousand men, of whom only four thousand five hundred were fit for active service in the field.[1]

What made the operations proposed against New York less promising of success was that the British commander at that point was taking steps to strengthen his position against an anticipated attack, by recalling from Virginia a part of the detachments formerly sent there. For it happened that after the conference at Wethersfield the despatches of General Washington announcing the result of that interview to Congress and to the French minister, M. de La Luzerne, with the letter of the Chevalier de Chastellux which has already been mentioned, were captured by British troops in New Jersey and carried to Sir Henry Clinton, who was thus made acquainted with the proposed movement to be directed against him at New York by the combined armies; whereupon he sent to Lord Cornwallis the order to embark his troops, in obedience to which that officer abandoned Williamsburg, to La Fayette's surprise, early in July, and retired to Portsmouth.

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[1] Marshall, Life of Washington, iv. 455.

The condition of affairs in America seemed to be growing worse from day to day. Aside from the feebleness of the Continental army in the North, the news from Virginia was, as General Washington had already declared, very alarming; for, although La Fayette was performing his part there with wonderful success, the Commander-in-Chief could not conceal from himself the fact that the gallant young general had necessarily been left in an extremely exposed position. Anxiety for the safety of so faithful an officer had also taken possession of the mind of the Comte de Rochambeau, who replied to the announcement of a temporary advantage obtained over the enemy by General Greene, "I should rather hear of his[1] junction with the Marquis de La Fayette in the defence of Virginia than of all the success in the world in Carolina, where I do not believe he is in a position to take Charleston."[2]

Indeed, the course of future events, as viewed from the camp of the allied armies upon the Hudson River, depended wholly upon the chances of assistance from the Comte de Grasse's West India fleet, and upon his arrival at a point where a co-operation between the land and naval forces would be feasible against the positions occupied by the British army, at a time when it should not yet be too late to revive the fast-failing vitality of the Revolution. General de Rochambeau described the situation, as he saw it, with chagrin and disappointment: "General Washington has but a handful of men. . . . This country has been driven to bay, and all its resources are giving out at once. The Continental money has been annihilated."[3]

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[1] Greene's.

[2] To General Washington, from Windham, 20th June, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

[3] Letters of Rochambeau to the Marquis de Ségur and the Comte de Grasse, from Providence, 16th June, 1781: Ibid.

The Comte de Grasse had announced his intention to come to America; but this was merely a declaration of his purpose in general terms, which he wrote at sea whilst upon his voyage from Brest to the West Indies and sent to the Comte de Rochambeau by the Sagittaire when that ship separated from the fleet to proceed with her convoy to Newport. The admiral informed M. de Rochambeau that the King had appointed him to the command of the naval forces sent to protect his possessions in the West Indies and those of his allies in North America. The forces he commanded, he said, were sufficient to execute any offensive operations which it might be to the interest of the allied Powers to undertake with a view of obtaining an honorable peace; but in order to operate effectively it would be necessary for him to have a description of the British naval armament and a detailed account of its present position and habitual movements. He asked to have this information sent to him at Santo Domingo, where he should be at the end of June; and he concluded by saying, "It will be toward the 15th of July, at the earliest, that I shall be able to reach the coast of North America. But it is necessary, in view of the short time I shall have to remain there, for the season will force me to leave, in any event, that every preparation likely to aid in the success of your projects shall be completed, so that nothing may delay us an instant in beginning our operations."[1]

This letter was dated on the admiral's flag-ship, the Ville de Paris, the 29th of March, 1781, and reached the French general, at Providence, on the 10th of June, upon the arrival of the Sagittaire and its convoy at Boston, after M. de Rochambeau had sent forward, by the frigate La Concorde, his urgent appeal to Admiral de Grasse, of the 28th and the 31st of May, which has already been

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

referred to. Rochambeau acted toward America always with an inflexible rectitude free from any trace of self-interest or personal emulation. With an earnest desire to help General Washington, he wrote again immediately to Admiral de Grasse, describing to him the situation as he had already done in his letter of the 28th and the 31st of May, of which he now enclosed him a duplicate; he urged him to come to the United States with all possible haste, and to bring land forces aboard his ships in order that the country might be saved. He informed M. de Grasse that since he had written his former letter he had heard four times from General Washington, who begged him to hurry with his army to the Hudson River, and that he was then making preparations to set out, in the hope that by threatening New York a diversion might be made of advantage to the State of Virginia.[1]

"But," said he, "I must not conceal from you, sir, that these people are at the end of their means; that Washington will not have half the troops he counted upon, and that I believe, although he is reticent about it, that he has not now six thousand men; that M. de la Fayette has not one thousand regular soldiers with the militia to defend Virginia, and about that many who are upon the way to unite with him; that General Greene lately received a check at Camden, upon which place he made an attempt, and that I do not know when or how he will join M. de la Fayette; that it is therefore of the greatest importance that you should take on board as many troops as possible; that four thousand or five thousand men would not be too many, either to help us destroy the enemy's works at Portsmouth, in Virginia, near Hampton Roads, where they have hitherto kept fifteen hundred men whilst the others operated in the interior, and all their small shipping with which they harass the poor Marquis de la Fayette in so damaging a manner upon the rivers, or, later, to force the Hook in taking possession of Sandy Hook by your land troops, which would facilitate the passage of the bar by your fleet; for we are certain that last September the Sandwich, and lately the London,

[1] From Providence, 11th June, 1781: MS. Letter Books, Library of Congress.

crossed it going in and coming out; finally, to help us in laying siege to Brooklyn in case we shall be able to take a position upon that point of Long Island with eight thousand men, reserving five thousand or six thousand upon the North River to cover King's Bridge.

"These are, sir, the various projects which you may keep in mind, and this is a picture of the present unfortunate situation of affairs in this country. I am thoroughly convinced that you will give us the naval superiority when you come, but I think I cannot repeat too often my earnest request that you shall bring soldiers with you, and money. I have already had the honor of writing you upon this latter subject a private letter, of which I enclose you a duplicate; and I beg leave to say again, sir, that it is indispensable that General Washington and M. de Barras should be notified beforehand, by a frigate, as to the time of your coming and the place where you intend to land.

"P.S. I observe by a letter which the Chevalier de la Luzerne has written you that M. Washington appears to wish you to land first at the Hook, in front of New York, in order to cut off Arbuthnot's squadron, if possible, from anchoring there. I subordinate my opinion to his, as I am bound to do; but our latest advices indicate that the enemy's squadron, after having anchored for several days outside the Hook, has put to sea and has gone toward the south."

This letter and the one which General de Rochambeau wrote in the last days of May are, with regard to their results, among the most important historical documents of the Revolution; for they laid the basis upon which was established the co-operation of the allied forces in the Yorktown campaign. They formulated the plan of action which Admiral de Grasse carried out, and presented the case to him with such emphatic expression that he executed it at once, without stopping to consult the ministers either of France or of Spain: assuming the responsibility in view of the unquestionable urgency of the case, he turned the course of his fleet toward North America; and that prompt action upon his part assured the success of the campaign.

The Comte de Grasse's reply reached Newport in the frigate La Concorde on the 12th of August; it was immediately despatched to General de Rochambeau, and two days later it was read by General Washington, with extreme satisfaction, at his head-quarters upon the Hudson River.

The letter was dated at the Cape of Santo Domingo, on the 28th of July.[1] The admiral acknowledged the receipt of the general's despatches, which he had found awaiting him upon his arrival at the Cape, upon the 16th of that month, and said, "I have learned with great chagrin of the distressing situation upon the Continent, and of the need of the prompt assistance which you call for." He had consulted immediately, he added, with M. de Lillancourt, the French governor of the island, and had obtained his assent to the embarkation for the United States of part of the garrison of Santo Domingo, consisting of the detachments of the regiments de Gâtinais, d'Agénois, and de Touraine, three thousand men, with one hundred artillerymen, one hundred dragoons, ten field-pieces, and a number of siege-guns and mortars, all under command of the Marquis de Saint-Simon, Maréchal de Camp, the whole to be placed on board of from twenty-five to twenty-nine ships of war. He announced that he should sail upon the 13th of August with this fleet, and should proceed with all haste to Chesapeake Bay, "the point which appears to me to have been indicated by you, Monsieur le Comte, and by MM. Washington, de la Luzerne, and de Barras, as the one from which the advantage which you propose may be most certainly attained." He had engaged for the expedition, as M. de Rochambeau requested him to do, the sum of one million two hundred thousand livres, which he should secure at Havana, whither he had detached a frigate for that purpose.

[1] MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

The troops whom the Comte de Grasse was thus borrowing for service in the United States were a part of the expedition which had been sent out to the West Indies with Admiral de Guichen the year before, under a convention entered into by the Courts of Versailles and Madrid, to take part in the projected operations against Florida; and they were now, by the terms of that agreement, under the military authority of Spain. But, as the Spanish Admiral, de Solano, did not wish to move until the approach of the winter months, he offered no objection to their departure during the interim. This, however, led to a limitation of Admiral de Grasse's assistance to General Washington which gave rise to questions of very serious import and could not fail at the outset to produce a feeling of disappointment. It called for such immediate haste upon the part of the combined armies in order to establish the co-operation, and it implied the necessity of success, almost as a condition precedent, within so short a term, as to render any undertaking far more difficult and to leave the efficiency of the expedition at least extremely uncertain. For, whether the purposes of their going to North America should have been accomplished or not, it was understood that, when the autumn arrived and the season should admit of military operations in the West Indies, Admiral de Solano must have his soldiers back.

The Comte de Grasse explained his position with perfect candor; and, since it was out of his power to change the circumstances under which he was preparing to bring the relief for which he had been appealed to, he asked, with reason, that no time should be lost in beginning the work after his arrival:

"As I shall be able to remain upon the Continent with my troops only until the 15th of October, I shall be obliged to you, Monsieur le Comte, if you make use of me promptly and effectively, in order that the time may be advantageously employed against either the naval or the land forces of the enemy; for it

will be utterly impossible for me to leave these troops with you longer than that, for several reasons; in the first place, because part of them are under the orders of the Spanish generals, and it was only upon the promise that they should be returned by the time those officers intend to begin their operations that I obtained leave to use them; and in the next place, because, as another part are serving in the garrison at Santo Domingo, M. de Lillancourt will not be able to spare them when the naval forces are engaged elsewhere.

"As this whole expedition has been undertaken at your request, and without consulting the ministers of France or of Spain, while I have felt myself authorized to assume certain responsibilities in the interest of the common cause, I should not venture to change the entire arrangement of their projects by transferring so important a body of troops.

"You will perfectly understand, Monsieur le Comte, how necessary it will be to make the best use of this precious time. I trust that the frigate will reach you so long before me that I shall find everything ready, and that upon the day after my arrival we may proceed to execute your plans, which I hope as earnestly as you do to see successfully accomplished.

"From the efforts I have made to fulfil all your requests, to supply the necessities of the army under your command, and to relieve the distresses of our allies, you will conceive how earnestly I desire to change your present position and to put a new aspect upon the state of affairs."

The receipt of this intelligence, on the 14th of August, presented instantly to the mind of General Washington the opportunity which now lay open to him for decisive action with advantages such as the Continental army had never possessed since the beginning of the war. He recognized in the situation presented by the co-operation of the French fleet a crisis upon the solution of which would probably depend the whole future of the American Revolution; and he saw that this was the moment which called for a supreme effort to relieve the country of a burden which was daily growing more distressing, and to strike a blow which, if successful, might assure the establishment of independence in America. It involved,

however, a far more serious undertaking than any of the preceding operations of the war; for it changed the entire plan of offence and defence hitherto adopted, and made necessary the removal of the military base from the lines along the Hudson River some four hundred miles toward the south, into the country of Virginia.

Admiral de Grasse was already upon his way to the Chesapeake, where he expected to be supported upon his arrival; and, under the circumstances of his coming, with the rigid conditions attached to the duration of his stay upon the American continent, there remained no time for consultation with him upon alternative details or for the complex arrangement of an extended campaign. The situation offered only one project, a perfectly simple one in outline; and that was, the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his army. If Cornwallis could be held where he then was until General Washington could unite the Continental army with the forces operating under the Marquis de La Fayette, and the formidable naval armament of Admiral de Grasse could secure possession of Chesapeake Bay and block him from escape by sea, the problem might readily be solved.

It was a case of enormous risks in the event of miscarriage, because it left the northern country open to invasion; but, on the other hand, the desperate condition of America justified the adoption of any plan of operation which gave reasonable promise of success. General Washington's broad comprehension of the circumstances under which he was acting decided him to seize this offer and to march his army into Virginia. We have it in his own words, as follows:[1]

"Matters having now come to a crisis, and a decisive plan to be determined on—I was obliged, from the shortness of Count de Grasse's promised stay on this coast—the apparent disinclina-

[1] General Washington's Journal, August 14th, Department of State.

tion in their naval officers to force the harbour of New York, and the feeble compliance of the States to my requisitions for men, hitherto, & little prospect of greater exertion in future, to give up all idea of attacking New York; & instead thereof to remove the French Troops & a detachment from the American Army to the Head of Elk, to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of co-operating with the force from the West Indies against the Troops in that State."

Having arrived at this conclusion, one of the first steps to be taken in connection with the measures necessary to put it into immediate effect was to send an announcement of it to La Fayette; and we find in the Journal of General Washington, under date of the 15th August, "Despatched a Courier to the Marquis de la Fayette with information of this matter—requesting him to be in perfect readiness to second my views & to prevent if possible the retreat of Cornwallis towards Carolina. He was also directed to Halt the Troops under the command of General Wayne if they had not made any great progress in their March to join the Southern Army."

The letters received by General Washington from La Fayette toward the end of July contained intelligence, it will be remembered, of the British retreat from Williamsburg and the embarkation of Lord Cornwallis's troops at Portsmouth, presumably for New York; and coupled with this was La Fayette's expressed desire to return to the main army. In his reply, on the 30th of July, from his head-quarters at Dobbs's Ferry,[1] General Washington, who was then hoping for news from the Comte de Grasse, and evidently entertaining the idea, even at that moment, of operations in other directions than against New York, in combination with the French fleet, said to him, though he dared not express his meaning too openly in regard to a matter which depended so completely upon concealment from the enemy,—

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 119.

"I take your private letter of the 20th in the light which you wish it, that of an unreserved communication from one friend to another; and I should be wanting in candor, were I not to expose my sentiments to you in as free a manner. I am convinced, that your desire to be with this army arises principally from a wish to be actively useful. You will not, therefore, regret your stay in Virginia until matters are reduced to a greater degree of certainty, than they are at present, especially when I tell you, that, from the change of circumstances with which the removal of part of the enemy's force from Virginia to New York will be attended, it is more than probable, that we shall also entirely change our plan of operations. I think we have already effected one part of the plan of campaign settled at Weathersfield; that is, giving a substantial relief to the southern States, by obliging the enemy to recall a considerable part of their force from thence. Our views must now be turned towards endeavouring to expel them totally from those States, if we find ourselves incompetent to the siege of New York. The difficulty of doing this does not so much depend upon obtaining a force capable of effecting it, as upon the mode of collecting that force to the proper point, and transporting the provisions and stores necessary for such an operation. You are fully acquainted with the almost impracticability of doing this by land; to say nothing of the amazing loss of men always occasioned by long marches, and those towards a quarter in which the service is disagreeable. I should not, however, hesitate to encounter these difficulties, great as they are, had we not prospects of transporting ourselves in a manner safe, easy, and expeditious." [1]

[1] M. Doniol (La Participation de la France, iv. 645, note) considers it an error to suppose that this intimation referred to the coming of the Comte de Grasse, which General Washington did not know of definitively until two weeks later: he believes that it had in view a willingness expressed by Admiral de Barras to go to Chesapeake Bay, and that General Washington was planning an operation in conjunction with M. de Barras when the latter should move out from Newport. But, in opposition to this theory, it must be remembered that the Comte de Rochambeau had already written his urgent letter of the 28th and 31st of May to the Comte de Grasse; that he had received M. de Grasse's letter of the 29th of March which came by the Sagittaire and which distinctly announced the intended arrival of the admiral upon the coast of North America about the middle of July; and that the Comte de Rochambeau had written him in reply to that, on the 11th of June, begging him to come at once with more money and more men. There can scarcely be any doubt that the arrival of Admiral de Grasse was, at the end of July, the uppermost thought in General Washington's mind.

"I approve of your resolution," he continued, "to reinforce General Greene. . . . Let your next attention be paid to training and forming the militia, with which you may be furnished, and disposing of them in such a manner, that they may be drawn at the shortest notice to whatever point the enemy may make their capital post, which I conclude will be Portsmouth. . . . But, above all things, I recommend an augmentation of your cavalry to as great an extent as possible. It may happen, that the enemy may be driven to the necessity of forcing their way through North Carolina to avoid a greater misfortune. A superiority of horse on our side would be fatal to them in such a case."

To this La Fayette answered,[1] "I have pretty well understood you, my dear general, but would be happy in a more minute detail, which, I am sensible, cannot be entrusted to letters. . . . But, for the present, I am of opinion, with you, I had better remain in Virginia; the more so, as Lord Cornwallis does not choose to leave us, and circumstances may happen that will furnish me agreeable opportunities in the command of the Virginian army."

In the mean time, after Lord Cornwallis had embarked his troops at Portsmouth, but before the transports had put to sea for New York, orders were received from Sir Henry Clinton which countermanded their sailing. The British commander-in-chief disapproved of Cornwallis's retreat from Williamsburg, and he reproved the general

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If we assume that he entertained a project of operating with M. de Barras, who had only eight ships of the line, a force to co-operate with which it is not likely that he would have transferred nearly the whole Continental army to Virginia, we are confronted by a statement which the Commander-in-Chief made in this letter of the 30th of July to La Fayette, as follows: "The advantages resulting from a move of the French fleet from Newport to the Chesapeake were early and strongly pointed out to Count de Barras, and I thought he had once agreed to put it in execution; but, by his late letters, he seemed to think that such a manœuvre might interfere with greater plans, and therefore he declined it. It would now be too late to answer the principal object, as, by accounts from a deserter, the troops arrived from Virginia last Friday."

[1] From New Kent Mountain, 11th August, 1781: Correspondence, American edition, i. 426.

with considerable severity for having made "so serious and mortifying a move as the re-passing James River, and retiring with his army to Portsmouth."[1] Instead of agreeing with his lieutenant that a defensive post in Virginia could not have the slightest influence on the war in the Carolinas, and only protected some acres of unhealthy swamp, forever liable to become a prey to a foreign enemy,[2] General Clinton insisted that Chesapeake Bay should be retained, as of the greatest importance in the conduct of the war, his unalterable opinion being that it was of the first consequence to the King's affairs on this continent that the British army should take possession of the Chesapeake and that it should not afterward be relinquished. He directed Lord Cornwallis, therefore, if the latter were still there upon receipt of his despatch, to take a healthy station upon the neck between York and James Rivers, for the purpose of covering a proper harbor for the line-of-battle-ships. If he should already have crossed the James River, and should find it expedient to go back and resume his position, he was directed to do so and to hold it until further instructions from head-quarters. It was also the wish of both Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Graves that Old Point Comfort should be held, in order to secure Hampton Roads, the admiral being of the opinion that York should be secured, so as to "give the command of the lower, or Elizabeth country, and deprive the rebels of the use of the two best settled rivers of the Chesapeak, and deter an enemy from entering;"[3] and Lord Cornwallis was authorized to retain any or all of the troops who had been ordered to New York and who might, in his judgment, be necessary to the carrying out of these undertakings.

[1] Sir Henry Clinton to Lord Cornwallis, New York, 15th July, 1781.
[2] Earl Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, Cobham, 8th July, 1781.
[3] Admiral Graves to Earl Cornwallis, off Sandy Hook, 12th July, 1781.

When Lord Cornwallis received these despatches, he had not only crossed the James River, the movement which his chief so strongly deprecated, but was already at Portsmouth, as has been stated above. The tenor of the communications did not accord with his military judgment, but he proceeded immediately to carry out his orders. He directed a survey of Old Point Comfort to be made by his engineers and certain British naval officers, with a view to establishing a post there, as Sir Henry Clinton desired him to do. But these gentlemen reported, after thorough examination, that, in their opinion, works constructed upon Old Point Comfort would not command the entrance to Hampton Roads or protect the King's war-ships lying there at anchor, and that therefore it could not serve as the defensive station sought for.[1] As Portsmouth was, by common consent, unsuited to the purposes in view, there was no alternative open to Lord Cornwallis, under his instructions, but to take possession of Yorktown and Gloucester and to establish fortifications there which should afford protection to the King's largest ships of the line; and this he now undertook to accomplish.

Leaving a garrison at Portsmouth, he transported the rest of his army up Chesapeake Bay, and took possession of Yorktown and Gloucester on the 1st of August. Subsequently the station at Portsmouth was evacuated, by his orders, and his whole force was concentrated at Yorktown and Gloucester on the 22d of August.

The Marquis de La Fayette continued to occupy his position at Malvern Hill, at the end of July, with two battalions of his light infantry and the Virginia militia. He still kept General Wayne with the Pennsylvania Line and the regular Virginia troops at Goode's Bridge,

[1] See the Reports of Lieutenant Sutherland, of the Engineers, 25th July, 1781, and of Captains Hudson, Symonds, Everitt, and Dundas, of the King's ships in the Chesapeake, 26th July, 1781, to Earl Cornwallis.

prepared to move to the southward to reinforce General Greene the moment it should be definitively known that the enemy's troops had put to sea for New York, or, in the event of a change in their destination, to be within call if it should become necessary for him to participate in any new operations north of the James. "General Wayne," he said, "is at Goode's Bridge, on Appomattox, with the Pennsylvanians and Virginia Continentals, and looks towards Roanoke or Potowmak."[1] General Muhlenberg occupied the middle ground between La Fayette's position and Suffolk, with one battalion of light infantry, some riflemen, and a small detachment of cavalry, watching the enemy at Portsmouth in case they should attempt to make a diversion from there into North Carolina. General Weedon was at Fredericksburg, ready to call out the Virginia militia if a fleet should appear in the Chesapeake. General Gregory was upon the other side of the Dismal Swamp, with orders from La Fayette to collect the militia, to mount cannon at the passes, and to secure every boat that might serve the enemy in escaping to North Carolina. This was the situation of La Fayette's forces on the 30th of July.

Already he was counting upon the arrival of the French fleet, which, of course, he expected would appear upon the coast during the summer, though he had not yet received the direct intelligence of it from General Washington's letter written at Dobbs's Ferry upon that day. His chief anxiety at that moment was lest the enemy's garrison might evacuate Portsmouth and escape into North Carolina without his being able to prevent it; for he said, "You know, my dear General, that, with a very trifling transportation, they may go by water from Portsmouth to Wilmington. The only way to shut up that passage is to have an army before Portsmouth and possess the head of

[1] To General Washington, from Malvern Hill, 30th July, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

these rivers; a movement which, unless I was certain of a naval superiority, might prove ruinous. But, should a fleet come into Hampton Road, and should I get some days notice, our situation would be very agreeable."[1]

Up to the 31st of July the Marquis de La Fayette had no intimation of Lord Cornwallis's plans; he knew only that the British army had embarked, that the winds had been favorable, that everything appeared to be in readiness, and yet that the transports had not sailed. In a letter to General Washington, marked *Private*, on the 31st of July,[2] he said,—

"A correspondent of mine, servant to Lord Cornwallis, writes on the 26th of July, at Portsmouth, and says his master, Tarleton, and Simcoe are still in town; but expect to move. The greatest part of the army is embarked. There is in Hampton Road one 50 guns ship and two six and thirty guns frigates, and 18 sloops loaded with horses. There remain but nine vessels in Portsmouth who appear to be getting ready. My lord's baggage is yet in town. His lordship is so shy of his papers that my honest friend says he can not get at them. . . . General Muhlenberg, with a corps of light infantry riflemen and horse is moving towards Portsmouth; but altho' I do not think they are going up the rivers or the Bay, the less so as they have made a parade of taking pilots on board, I had rather act on the cautious scale, and, by keeping a supporting position, leave no chance to his Lordship to out-manœuvre us.

"Should a French fleet now come in Hampton Road, the British army would, I think, be ours.

"I am literally following your Excellency's instructions, and shall continue to do so to the best of my power.

". . . I am going to send a flag to Lord Cornwallis. I owe him the justice to say, that his conduct to me has been peculiarly polite, and many differences between commissaries very graciously adjusted by him to my satisfaction."

On the night of July 31, however, La Fayette received intelligence that the enemy had not gone to sea, but that

[1] To General Washington, from Malvern Hill, 30th July, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

[2] From Malvern Hill: Washington Papers, Department of State.

their fleet was standing up the bay, which he communicated immediately to General Wayne, ordering him at the same time to move his troops in the direction of the main body of the army: "I wish you to proceed immediately with your troops to Manikin Town, where they will cross and where you will hear more fully from me."[1]

La Fayette conceived Lord Cornwallis's purpose now to be to proceed up the Chesapeake in order to operate against Baltimore. In consequence of this, he broke up his camp at Malvern Hill on the 1st of August, with the determination to unite his forces and push toward Fredericksburg. He had reached Richmond, on the 3d of August, when he learned, by further information from the enemy, that Lord Cornwallis had halted at Yorktown. "The enemy's embarkation having at last sail'd," he wrote to Baron Steuben,[2] "I supposed it would go to New York; but, to my great surprise, they stood up the Bay and the general opinion was they were going to Baltimore. This movement, I confess, appeared to me very different from what their present interest seems to be. It has, however, been explained by their entering York River and landing at York and Gloucester. One would think they mean to take post there, and perhaps intelligences of our successes in the West Indies have rendered it imprudent for them to venture out of the Capes.[3] Thinking the enemy should go to New York and might send a reinforcement to South Carolina, I had determined to send the cavalry to General Greene; but as they are determined to remain with us, I request, my dear Baron, you will push on every Dragoon that can be equipped to this camp."

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[1] To General Wayne, from Malvern Hill, 31st July, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] From Richmond, 3d August, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[3] Admiral de Grasse, in concert with the Marquis de Bouillé, had taken the island of Tobago.

La Fayette was fully conscious of the gravity of the situation, particularly in case the enemy should seize Baltimore and cut off his communication to the northward; and it made him all the more eager to reach Fredericksburg as soon as possible. On the same day[1] he sent orders from Richmond to General Wayne to cross the James River by the nearest route in order to form a junction with him at Johnstone's Mill, a few miles below New Castle, on the Pamunkey, announcing his own intention of moving from Richmond to New Castle, and requesting Wayne to send his cavalry ahead to join the army. "It would look," said he, "as if they intended something permanent in this quarter; but, be this as it may, we must take a position nearer to Fredericksburg and Potomack. The strongest assurances of their dividing their force between the Southward and New York might not justify our leaving these parts without cover. We must act as if they were in earnest; because, if we do not, they may be in earnest."[2]

He was at New Castle on the 4th of August, whence he wrote again to General Wayne, and his letter clearly shows the uncertainty of his position, as well as the difficulties he was obliged to encounter. He declared that when the enemy sailed up the bay he still believed the fleet would tack about and push for New York; and even after they had landed at Yorktown he was suspicious that their movement was intended as a feint to mislead him toward the north, in order that the British army might escape into North Carolina.

"But," he continued, "as it is possible they mean to move up the country, as it is probable a post at York is in contemplation, as certainly the arrival of a whaleboat from New York has brought fresh and different orders, as every intelligence but that of one deserter affirms Lord

[1] The 3d of August.

[2] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Cornwallis and Tarleton are with the fleet, I am, in spite of me, driven, though not blinded, into the movement I now make, and should be very blameable if the greatest part of the State I am to defend was against all intelligences risked upon a speculation."[1]

He instructed Wayne, therefore, to take a position between Bottom's Bridge and Westover, he himself having concluded not to move so far away as the road to Fredericksburg, but to halt for the present with the light infantry and the militia near the Pamunkey River. This would give him the advantage of being within twenty miles of Wayne, and would permit a concerted action with him, in case of necessity, by uniting to cross either the James River at Westover to go south, or the Pamunkey if it should seem best to move northward. He was ready thus to move as circumstances should dictate, though his situation was evidently embarrassing to him from lack of information; for he added, in his letter to Wayne, "When a general has nothing but horse and foot to calculate upon, he may avoid useless movements. But when he is to guess at every possible whim of an army that flies with the wind and is not within reach of spies or reconnoitures, he must forcibly walk in the dark."

His lack of cavalry made it very difficult for him to reconnoitre; and whilst, as he said, he "kept moving," he was not strong enough to consider his situation "equal to the defensive,—much less so to any offensive prospect;" for part of the militia were not armed at all, and many of them were unfit for military duty, as he declared in his earnest appeals to the Executive of Virginia to overcome these defects.[2] To Baron Steuben he wrote, "Tarleton is arrived at York. I dread the consequences

[1] From New Castle, 4th August, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] To Governor Nelson, from New Castle, 6th August, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS.

of such a superiority of horse."[1] On the 6th of August he still occupied his position upon the Pamunkey River, whence he wrote to General Washington that, "as I had not indulged myself too near Portsmouth, I was able to cross towards Fredericksburg. But instead of continuing his voyage up the Bay, my lord entered York River and landed at York and Gloucester. . . . My Movements have not been precipitate; we were in time to take our course down Pamunkey River and will move to some position where the several parts of the army will unite. I have some militia in Gloucester County,—some about York. We shall act agreeably to circumstances, but avoid driving ourselves into a false movement which for want of cavalry and command of the rivers would give the ennemy the advantage of us. His lordship plays so well that no blunder can be hoped from him to recover a bad step of ours."[2]

He added, apologetically, in reference to the reports he had made, first that the enemy were going to sail for New York, then that they were heading toward Baltimore, and finally that they had effected a landing at York, "You must not wonder, my dear General, that there has been a fluctuation in my intelligences. I am positive the British councils have also been fluctuating. I am so earnest in my opinion that I would still not be surprised if the light infantry and Anspachers were detached to New York."

With an almost prophetic intimation of what was actually to happen a little while later, he continued, "York is surrounded by the river and a morass. The entrance is but narrow. There is, however, a commanding hill, at least I am so informed, which if occupied by them would much extend their works. Gloucester is a neck of land projected into the river and opposite to York. Their

[1] 9th August, 1781: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

[2] From the "Camp on Pamunkey," 6th August, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

vessels, the biggest of whom is a 44, are between the two towns. Should a fleet come in at this moment, our affairs would take a very happy turn." But, submitting to what appeared to him at that time to be the result of General Washington's judgment, he concluded, "Had not your attention been turned to New York, something with a fleet might be done in this quarter. But I see New York is the object and consequently I attend to your instructions by Captain Olney."

To watch the enemy, to defend the State of Virginia so far as he was able with the force at his command, and to preserve the freedom of his own movements, were for the remaining weeks of August the purposes to which La Fayette devoted his attention. In the mean time he anxiously awaited the arrival of the confidential communication which General Washington, in his letter of the 30th of July, had promised to send him. He left his camp on the Pamunkey, near New Castle, on the 10th of August, and moved down the river, by way of Ruffin's Ferry and New Kent Mountain; and on the 13th he took a position between the forks of the York River, in the vicinity of West Point, where he established a post for the purpose of reconnoitring along the river. He encamped the militia four miles from West Point, and the light infantry eight miles from there.[1]

The British continued to fortify their positions at York and at Gloucester, without making any attempt to disturb the American army in its camp: so that, as nothing more important took place than the excursions of foraging parties into the districts lying near by, it was a period of quiet, and, what was extremely welcome to La Fayette's

[1] To General Wayne, from "Camp on Pamunky," 9th August, and from the "Forks of York River," 16th and 18th August, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. To General Washington, from New Kent Mountain, 11th August: Washington Papers, Department of State. To Baron Steuben, from "Montock Hill," 13th August: Steuben Papers, New York Historical Society.

troops, of rest. His camp, protected by the rivers, was well secured against attack. Whilst his main body lay within supporting distance, his scouting parties kept the enemy close to the York River, and his men foraged at times within sight of the British lines.[1]

At length came the news which he expected. It stirred La Fayette with anticipations of extraordinary hopefulness that the opportunity might now arise for which he had been constantly longing, and that he should see the day when the combined forces of the Continental army and the French allies should face the British upon the field of battle. He could not, however, foresee the full glory of what was to come; for he did not then know that General Washington would unite with the Comte de Rochambeau and march his troops into Virginia to take command of the operations: he knew only that Admiral de Grasse was on his way, and he was confident that this would give rise to new opportunities and to further activity in military affairs.

This was the point in the career of the Marquis de La Fayette whence he set out upon the way which ended, two months later, with his participation in the glorious events of the siege of Yorktown; it was also the beginning of his last military service in the army of the United States of America. There were for him but two months more of patience and of zeal in the struggle to which he had devoted himself so long with loyal attachment, and then he could sheathe his sword with triumph; his task would be done.

His first step was to order General Wayne, who, it will be remembered, was then on the north side of the James River, to take a position near Westover, in order to be prepared to cut off the British if they should attempt a

[1] To His Excellency Thomas McKean, from the "Camp between the Forks of York River," 21st August, 1781: Papers of the Old Congress, Department of State.

movement toward the south. He wrote him, on the 22d of August, from Colonel Braxton's house, at West Point,[1] "The long expected letter from General Washington is at length arrived. In consequence of which you will begin your march to-morrow morning, and move pretty rapidly to Westover, where you will find boats in readiness to cross. But I would not have you to cross till you hear further from me. You will therefore take a convenient position for your supplies and this purpose."

His official communication to Wayne did not admit of his telling the secret which he was anxious to impart to him, but which it was of the greatest consequence not to expose to the enemy through intercepted despatches or through spies. But three days later he wrote him, by a safe messenger,[2]—

"I am happy in this safe opportunity to open my heart to you. There is an important news which I communicate to you alone and which I request you to keep, Gen. Wayne, from everybody's knowledge. There is great reason to hope for an immediate aid by water. In the last letter from the General he communicates the intelligence, which I am bound upon honor to keep secret; directs me to keep you here until further orders; and, above all, recommends that every measure be taken to prevent the enemy's retreating to Carolina.

"Your position at Westover seems to ease the mind of Lord Cornwallis, and should he cross over James River, your troops may be on the other side by the time the remainder of the army arrive there. But in case our friends occupy the water passages, we may in one day form our junction about Soan's Bridge and co-operate with them against the common enemy.

"I would therefore wish you to take an healthy position near Westover, to make every preparation to collect the means of crossing, to keep up the idea of a southern destination, and to improve your situation upon James River in having your men well supplied."

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[1] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] From Mr. Ruffin's, 25th August, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The letter which had brought this news was the one written by General Washington to La Fayette from Dobbs's Ferry, on the 15th of August, upon having received the announcement of the Comte de Grasse's intentions,—the same to which the Commander-in-Chief referred when he wrote in his Journal, under date of the 15th of August, "Despatched a Courier to the Marquis de la Fayette with information of this matter." It was as follows:[1]

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—I have received your letters of the 26th and 30th ultimo and 1st instant. I cannot learn that any troops have yet arrived at New York from Virginia. A fleet of twenty sail came in last Saturday with troops, but they are said to be Hessian recruits from Europe. The Concorde frigate has arrived at Newport from Count de Grasse. He was to leave St. Domingo the 3d[2] of this month, with a fleet of between twenty-five and twenty-nine sail of the line, and a considerable body of land forces. His destination is immediately for the Chesapeake; so that he will either be there by the time this reaches you, or you may look for him every moment. Under these circumstances, whether the enemy remain in full force, or whether they have only a detachment left, you will immediately take such a position as will best enable you to prevent their sudden retreat through North Carolina, which I presume they will attempt the instant they perceive so formidable an armament. Should General Wayne, with the troops destined for South Carolina, still remain in the neighborhood of James River, and should the enemy have made no detachment to the southward, you will detain those troops until you hear from me again, and inform General Greene of the cause of their delay. If Wayne should have marched, and should have gained any considerable distance, I would not have him halted.

"You shall hear further from me as soon as I have concerted plans and formed dispositions for sending a reinforcement from hence. In the meantime, I have only to recommend a continuation of that prudence and good conduct, which you have manifested through the whole of your campaign. You will be particularly careful to conceal the expected arrival of the Count;

[1] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 127.

[2] 13th.

because, if the enemy are not apprized of it, they will stay on board their transports in the Bay, which will be the luckiest circumstance in the world. You will take measures for opening a communication with Count de Grasse the moment he arrives, and will concert measures with him for making the best use of your joint forces until you receive aid from this quarter. I would not wish you to call out a large body of militia upon this occasion, but rather keep those you have compact and ready for service."

Thereupon General de La Fayette sent Colonel de Gimat, the French officer who had formerly served upon his staff, but who now commanded one of the Continental battalions of light infantry, to Cape Henry with despatches for the Comte de Grasse, to be delivered to the admiral immediately upon the arrival of the West India fleet. In these despatches he gave M. de Grasse a detailed statement of the military situation in Virginia,—of his own strength and position, and of those of the enemy. He begged him to sail up Chesapeake Bay immediately, to drive the enemy's frigates into the James River in order to keep the passage clear, and to blockade the York River. He recommended him also to send two vessels above Lord Cornwallis's position, before the batteries at York and Gloucester could be completed, and whilst the ships would have no difficulty in running by, intending by this manœuvre to assist the land forces in the blockade of Cornwallis's army. Having taken these preparatory steps, he replied to General Washington's letter, on the 21st of August,[1]—

"My dear General,—Your favor of the 15th has safely come to hand. I am going to give you an account of matters in this quarter.

"The greater part of the ennemy are at York which they do not as yet fortify but are very busy upon Gloster neck, where they have a pretty large corps under Co[l] Dundass. They have at York

[1] From the Forks of the York River, Washington Papers, Department of State.

a 44 guns ship; frigates and vessels are scattered lower down. There is still a small garrison at Portsmouth. Should they intend to evacuate, at least they are proceeding with amazing slowness.

"From the ennemy's preparations, I would infer that they are working for the protection of a fleet and for a defence against another; that (in case they hold Portsmouth) the main body would be at York and a detached corps upon Gloster neck to protect the water battery. These fortifications are much contracted. From the ennemy's caution and partial movements, I would conclude their intelligence is not very good, and they wish to come at an explanation of my intentions and prospects.

"We have hitherto occupied the forks of York River, thereby looking both ways. Some militia have prevented the ennemy's parties from remaining any time at or near Williamsburg, and false accounts have given them some alarms. Another body of militia under Co[l] Moriss has kept them pretty close in Gloster town and foraged in their vicinity.

"Upon the receipt of your orders I wrote to the Governor that the intelligence of some plans of the ennemy rendered it proper to have 600 militia collected upon Black Water. I wrote to Gn[l] Gregory, near Portsmouth, that I had an account the ennemy intended to push a detachment to Carolina, which would greatly defeat a scheme we had there. I have requested Gen[l] Wayne to move towards the Southward to be ready to cross James River at Westover.

"A battalion of light infantry and our only 100 dragoons being in Gloster County, I call them my van guard and will take my quarters there for one or two days while the troops are filing off towards James River. Our little army will consequently assemble again upon the waters of Chicaominy, and should Jamestown island be thought a good place for a junction we will be in a situation to form it while we render it more difficult to the ennemy to attempt a journey to Carolina.

"I shall to-day write to the gentleman.[1] Nothing as yet has appeared. I will take measures that he may hear from me the moment he arrives.

"Taking whatever is in the rivers, and taking possession of the rivers themselves while the main body defends the Bay; forming a junction of land forces at a convenient and safe point; checking the ennemy, but giving nothing to chance until properly reinforced; this is the plan I mean to propose.

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[1] The Comte de Grasse.

"Some days ago I sent Washington[1] to contrive the Maryland new levies out of their State. These Marylanders will be 500; Virginians 400; Pennsylvanians 600; light infantry 850; dragoons 120.—Such is the Continental force, and in the course of 8 days the already called for militia will make 3000.

"Everything I put at the lowest estimate, but we may depend upon 2500 Continentals, rank and file, exclusive of artillery, and three, or if more are wanted, four thousand militia. Maryland would send 600 militia at least. I have 200 more dragoons and horses ready and am waiting for accoutrements.

"There is such a confusion in affairs in this part of the world that immense difficulties are found for a proper formation of magazines. I have, however, strongly urged the matter. The moment I received your first letter, I sent M^{r} M^{c}Henry to Richmond, who had long conversations about it with the Governor and Council. I have recommended such places as might answer your purposes. This State has a large quantity of beef, of corn, some flour, very little rum. Maryland ought to be early called upon. Water transportation will, I hope, ease our difficulties. Had we anything like monney, matters would go on very well. The dry season has rendered most of the mills useless.

"We have no cloathing of any sort. No heavy artillery in order. Some arms will be wanting, some horse accoutrements and great deal of ammunition. Nothing but your own entreaties may have a sufficient quantity of those articles transported to the head of the Bay.

"In the present state of affairs, my dear General, I hope you will come yourself to Virginia, and that if the French army moves this way, I will have at least the satisfaction of beholding you myself at the head of the combined armies; in which case I beg leave to recommend you may be accompanied by the heads of departments, which will save you an immense deal of trouble. The men we have now here could not be equal to the task of a campaign upon so large a scale.

"In two days I will write again to your Excellency and keep you particularly and constantly informed. Unless something is done the very moment, and it will probably be difficult, Lord Cornwallis must be attacked with pretty great apparatus.

"But when a French fleet takes possession of the Bay and rivers, and we form a land force superior to his, their army must

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[1] Major George Washington, aide-de-camp to the Marquis de La Fayette.

soon or late be forced to surrender, as we may get what reinforcements we please.

"Adieu, my dear General. I heartily thank you for having ordered me to remain in Virginia, and to your goodness to me I am owing the most beautiful prospect that I may ever behold."

Nine days later, on the 30th of August, the Comte de Grasse arrived with his fleet of twenty-eight ships of the line in Chesapeake Bay.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN—SURRENDER OF CORNWALLIS—LA FAYETTE'S RETURN TO FRANCE.

BEFORE the Marquis de La Fayette's last letter to him had been written, General Washington was upon his way to Virginia. Having given command of the forces on the Hudson River to General Heath, to whom was also intrusted the defence of the adjacent country,[1] he had broken camp at Dobbs's Ferry on the 19th of August and put his whole army in motion, with the purpose of marching to the Head of Elk, whence he should proceed down the Chesapeake to a junction with La Fayette. He crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry with the Continental troops on the 21st; and the following days were occupied in passing over the French army, with its equipment, baggage, and artillery. By the 25th they were all across, and the two armies proceeded southward through New Jersey, in the direction of Springfield and Chatham, skirting the Hudson and using every device to keep their destination secret and to impress the British by frequent demonstrations with the idea that the expedition was intended for an attack upon Staten Island. So successfully was this purpose carried out, indeed, that Sir Henry Clinton, probably convinced by the letters intercepted after the conference at Wethersfield that this movement was in furtherance of General Washington's design upon New York, was completely misled; and whilst he was preparing for the expected attack the allied armies gained

[1] Instructions to General Heath: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 136.

their designated positions near Chatham, on the 28th of August.

After halting for a day to unite the forces and to bring up the rear, General Washington concluded that one march more might be made in the southerly direction by concealing his real purpose from the enemy and making it appear that he was marching to Sandy Hook to facilitate the entrance of the French fleet within the bay. Therefore the whole army was put in motion in three columns.[1] This manœuvre was successfully carried out, and thereupon the whole force turned and moved rapidly toward Trenton, at which point, the water being low, they forded the Delaware River[2] and pushed on to Philadelphia, where they all arrived on the 5th of September.

General Washington preceded the army to Philadelphia, having reached the city on the 30th of August, in order to "arrange matters there—provide vessels—& hasten the transportation of the Ordnance stores &ca."[3] He had hoped to move the troops from Trenton to Christiana Bridge by water; but, though he "hastened up all the vessels that could be procured" at Philadelphia, he was obliged to admit that they were inadequate; therefore he and the Comte de Rochambeau decided that the armies should proceed by land to the Head of Elk, except the 2d New York regiment, who had transportable boats with them, in which they were ordered to sail down to Christiana Bridge.[4]

The Continental "army" with which General Washington was thus setting out upon an expedition of greater magnitude and far wider military importance, from the boldness of its execution and the influence of its results,

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[1] General Washington's Journal, 30th August.

[2] "Nous fûmes assez heureux pour la trouver basse et la passer à gué auprès de Trenton." Mémoires de Rochambeau, i. 287.

[3] Washington's Journal.

[4] The march to Virginia is described with great accuracy in Prof. Henry P. Johnston's narrative of "The Yorktown Campaign," New York, 1881.

than any other in the war, was composed of but two thousand men. So far had the tide of the Revolution ebbed in this summer of 1781, and to such an extent was the country exhausted by the incessant demands of the preceding years of struggle, that the Commander-in-Chief could bring together, in the face of this impending crisis, only what naturally enough seemed to General de Rochambeau a mere "handful of men."

They consisted of the light infantry under Colonel Scammell, with two light companies from New York and two from Connecticut; the remainder of the New Jersey Line; two regiments of New York Continentals; Hazen's regiment and the regiment of Rhode Island; together with Lamb's regiment of artillery, with cannon and other ordnance for the field and for a siege.[1]

Accompanying this little force were the well-equipped and thoroughly disciplined French troops, four thousand men, under General the Comte de Rochambeau.

General Washington's chief solicitude now was that he should reach Virginia in time to co-operate with the fleet against Lord Cornwallis, and before the British army could extricate itself from the dangerous situation which the reports of the Marquis de La Fayette had informed him it was then in. If Cornwallis could be caught at Yorktown and Gloucester by the combined armies on the land side, increased by the additional troops who were coming with M. de Grasse, and by the fleet which should block him in upon the water and prevent succor from New York, the prospect was bright. If, on the other hand, Lord Cornwallis were enabled to dislodge himself and escape to the south, the undertaking must fail, and it might end in a disaster the consequences of which it was impossible to estimate. The prevention of this escape of the British was the key to the situation.

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[1] General Washington's Journal, 19th August.

With great earnestness of language, General Washington intrusted that important duty to La Fayette; and with absolute reliance upon his watchfulness in a situation which was daily becoming more exacting, as well as upon his fidelity, which the events of the campaign had amply proved, he wrote to him, whilst the army was crossing the Hudson River at King's Ferry,[1]—

"MY DEAR MARQUIS,—Agreeably to my intentions communicated to you on the 15th instant, the troops destined for the southern quarter are now in motion. The American detachment is already on the west side of the Hudson. The French army I expect will reach the Ferry this day. Our march will be continued with all the despatch that our circumstances will admit. As it will be of great importance towards the success of our present enterprise, that the enemy on the arrival of the fleet should not have it in their power to effect their retreat, I cannot omit to repeat to you my most earnest wish, that the land and naval forces, which you will have with you, may so combine their operations, that the British army may not be able to escape. The particular mode of doing this I shall not at this distance attempt to dictate. Your own knowledge of the country, from your long continuance in it, and the various and extended movements, which you have made, have given you great opportunities for observation; of which I am persuaded your military genius and judgment will lead you to make the best improvement. You will, my dear Marquis, keep me constantly advised of every important event respecting the enemy or yourself."

In execution of this plan, the importance of which was perfectly clear to his mind, La Fayette ordered General Wayne to cross the James River at Westover for the purpose of guarding the south bank and the roads leading southward, whilst he crossed the Pamunkey himself, and approached the north side of the James, occupying with his main army the ground which he had held about a month before, near the scene of the action of Green

[1] 21st August, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 140.

Spring. Wayne's troops crossed on the 30th of August,[1] and La Fayette, who had moved to Holt's Forge, wrote to General Wayne on the 31st,[2] "Now that you are over, I am pretty easy.—40 dragoons, 300 riflemen and 300 militia are to join you immediately at Cabin's Point. I request you will use every endeavour to be acquainted with the enemy's movements. Mulberry or Hog Island seem to be the best place for them to cross. I have previously requested the French Admiral to push frigates up James River, but this depends upon winds. The remainder of the army is ready to support you."

Admiral de Grasse received La Fayette's despatches, by the hand of Colonel de Gimat, at Cape Henry, immediately upon his arrival; and, whilst he was somewhat disappointed not to find General Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau awaiting him ready for instant co-operation, he was delighted with the situation of Lord Cornwallis and the British army, and he took measures to give La Fayette the support of the Marquis de Saint-Simon's troops, by landing them without loss of time. He even grew impatient at the delay which must occur before the arrival of the main army; and, in his eagerness to accomplish the purpose of his coming within the time to which his stay in North America was limited, he proposed to begin operations against the British without waiting for General Washington,—an excess of haste which La Fayette moderated by his persuasions, and by arguments which the admiral was forced to admit were based upon a superior acquaintance with the country and a matured experience in American military affairs.

La Fayette's dearest hope had been to see General

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[1] Feltman's Journal: "August 30th—This whole day was employed in crossing the troops and baggage over James River, and encamped on Col. Mead's farm. . . . This place is called Prince George County."

[2] Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Washington at the head of the combined armies in Virginia; he had declared it in his letter to him, and his devoted affection to the General impelled him to the most strenuous efforts to hold the military situation as it then was until his beloved commander should have time to arrive and direct operations himself to a successful issue of the campaign and to the glory of America. He carried this point notwithstanding the fever of anxiety aboard the flag-ship to begin; and General du Portail, who had joined the admiral and whose influence went far in sustaining the arguments of La Fayette, wrote to the Comte de Rochambeau, then on his way with General Washington, to hasten his march; he added that he thought the temptation to attack Yorktown was no longer dangerous, because he believed the glory of preparing the triumph would satisfy the ambition of the French commanders, yet he urged him, "Venez vite, mon général, venez vite." And, referring to La Fayette, he said, "Our young general's judgment is mature; with all the ardor of his temperament, I think he will be able to wait for the proper moment and not touch the fruit until it is ripe."[1]

In the mean time, the Marquis de Saint-Simon, who, although an older man than La Fayette, of much wider military experience, and holding the rank of field-marshal in the French armies, had consented immediately to serve under him as the ranking American major-general in Virginia, made preparations to land his troops and to form a junction with the American forces. M. de Saint-Simon proceeded up the James River under protection of three frigates as far as Jamestown, where he began to set his men ashore on the 2d of September.[2]

[1] From Cape Henry, 2d September, 1781: MS. Letter Books of Rochambeau, Library of Congress.

[2] La Fayette to Governor Nelson, from Holt's Forge, 2d September, 1781: Lossing Collection of MSS. "The French troops are landing at James Town."

La Fayette, having proceeded along the north bank of the James River to the vicinity of Norrell's Mill and Chickahominy Church, was ready to cover on that side the landing of the French; whilst General Wayne, who had been moving eastward through Prince George County and Surry, and to whom La Fayette sent orders to proceed at once to the ferry opposite James Island and to cross there,[1] was ready to defend the approaches upon the southern bank. In consequence of these precautions, the landing was accomplished without interruption from the British.[2]

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[1] La Fayette to Wayne, from Holt's Forge, 1st September, 1781: Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] La Fayette's movement from his position at the Forks of the York River to the north bank of the James is given, as follows, in the Journal of Lieutenant Ebenezer Wild, of Colonel Vose's light infantry, Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, October and November, 1890:

"August 28th—At 2 o'clk A.M. the militia began their march, & proceeded to Ruffin's ferry" (on the Pamunkey) "and are crossing the river with all possible expedition. . . .

"29th Our artillery and stores have been crossing the ferry all day. . . .

"30th The General beat at daylight, at which time our tents were struck and baggage loaded. At sunrise we began our march and proceeded to Ruffin's ferry, which we crossed as soon as possible, and marched 7 miles, halted and encamped on the same ground we left the 12th inst.

"31st At half past 4 o'clk A.M. we began our march and proceeded 10 miles, halted and encamped (at Holt's Forge) on the same ground we left the 13th July. . . .

"Saturday, 1st September, 1781. Remained in camp all day. We have intelligence that his Excellency Gen[l] Washington, with a large body of troops, is on his march to join our little army. We are likewise assured of the arrival of a French fleet (at the mouth of York river), consisting of 28 sail of the line, commanded by his Excellency the Count De Grass. This fleet has 4000 land troops on board, commanded by Major General the Marquis St. Simons.

"2d, Sunday—The General beat half an hour before day. At daylight we began our march and proceeded about 8 miles, halted and pitched our tents in a field near Dyerscon [Diascund] creek, where we halted till 3 o'clk P.M., at which time we began our march again, leaving our tents & baggage, and proceeded about 7 or 8 miles & halted near Chichohomny Church. General Wayne was wounded by one of our sentinels in the evening.

"3d—Began our march at daylight. Proceeded about 8 miles, and halted near Green Springs, where our men had orders to wash & put on clean clothes, expecting to march to James Town & join the French troops, which

Lieutenant Feltman, of the Pennsylvania Line, who was with General Wayne, thus describes this crossing,[1] under date of September 2:

"This morning at day-light, the troops took up the line of march and encamped opposite Jamestown, where lay a small English vessel under the sanction of a flag. We lay about two hours on our ground expecting every moment to see a glorious sight; at last a number of large boats appeared in sight with about three thousand French troops on board, and also three large armed vessels to cover the troops landing.

"The troops landed on our opposite side, on James Island, and there encamped—which spread an universal joy amongst our officers and soldiers. Never did I behold a more beautiful and agreeable sight. . . .

"This evening Gen. Wayne was unfortunately wounded in the thigh with a buck shot, by one of the Marquis's sentinels, which renders him unfit for duty.[2]

"Sept. 3d. This morning the general beat at 6 o'clock. The troops in half an hour after marched to James River, where the French boats lay in order to cross our troops. We landed below James's Island, and lay by the greatest part of the day, near the church, within half a mile of where we had the action of the 6th of July last. In the evening we marched for the Green Springs, and there lay that night without tent or any other shelter. . . .

"Took a walk to take a view of the French troops, who make a very fine soldierly appearance, they being all very tall men; their uniform is white coats turned up with blue, their underclothes are white."

The Marquis de La Fayette, having thus received the Marquis de Saint-Simon upon his arrival in America,

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were landed there. But after halting about three hours we took up our line of march again and proceeded six miles towards Williamsburg. After halting a few moments, marched back the same road three miles, where we remained the remaining part of the day."

[1] Feltman's Journal, *ubi supra*.

[2] General Wayne went to the Marquis de La Fayette's camp that evening, and, upon his approach, was mistaken for an enemy by the sentinel, who fired upon him. The wound was not serious, nor did it detain him very long from active service. See Stillé's Major-General Anthony Wayne and the Pennsylvania Line, p. 280.

and having concentrated his whole force by calling in General Wayne and uniting that officer's detachment with the main body of the army at Green Spring, proceeded to take post still nearer to the British army, in order to secure the whole country about Yorktown and Gloucester. His army had now become formidable by the accession to it of three thousand regular troops with their equipment and artillery; and he was in a position to carry out effectually General Washington's injunction not to allow Cornwallis to escape. He began to throw his troops forward on the 4th of September; and by the night of the 7th he had taken up a strong position at Williamsburg with his combined army, almost within striking distance of the enemy.

This was La Fayette's last movement as an independent commander in America; it was the one also by which the British army was held fast, upon the land side, until General Washington arrived and took charge of the operations. Lord Cornwallis made a reconnoissance in force against La Fayette's position at Williamsburg a few days later; but, having concluded that it was too well defended to be successfully attacked, he withdrew his army and thenceforward devoted his energies to the fortification of Yorktown.

At this point the ill-suppressed impatience of the French commanders, and their desire to hasten back to the West Indies, made themselves felt again in a new demand upon La Fayette to attack Lord Cornwallis at once,—a demand in which, he tells us, both the admiral and the Marquis de Saint-Simon united, these gentlemen representing to him with repeated arguments that it was only fair, after so long and so fatiguing a campaign, which had now ended fortunately, that the glory of overthrowing Cornwallis should belong to those who had reduced him to his present extremity; and the admiral offered to send for the purpose not only all the

marines from aboard his ship, but also as many sailors as La Fayette should ask for. But La Fayette was deaf to this temptation. He replied that General Washington and General Rochambeau would soon arrive; that it would be better to hasten their coming than to make a murderous attack which would waste much blood merely for the gratification of personal vanity; that they were certain to capture the enemy by regular approaches, after the succor arrived, and, in that event, to spare the lives of many soldiers.[1]

There is no doubt that the attachment of the Marquis de La Fayette to General Washington, and his tenacity at this juncture, preserved for the great American commander the glory of laying out and executing the plans of the Yorktown campaign: it is one of the finest examples of La Fayette's personal loyalty and unselfishness, of which he gave so many during his service in the Revolutionary War.

At the same time, from their point of view, the Comte de Grasse and M. de Saint-Simon were perfectly justified in their desire to accomplish the purpose of the expedition as quickly as possible with the means which were at hand. Their proposition to attack Cornwallis and to begin operations at once was a purely military one, the propriety of which depended altogether upon their being entirely ready and sufficiently strong. General Washington, as Commander-in-Chief, had given them no instructions, and had not requested them to await his arrival; on the contrary, he had pointed out to Admiral de Grasse, as he had done to La Fayette, the great importance of *preventing the escape of Cornwallis;* he announced his approach in company with M. de Rochambeau and asked for transports and frigates to be sent to the Head of Elk to convey the troops down Chesa-

[1] Mémoires historiques de La Fayette, i. 277.

peake Bay, but he gave no directions as to the conduct of the campaign or as to the junction of his troops with those of M. de Saint-Simon and General de La Fayette.[1] The French commanders were under no obligation to General Washington such as that under which La Fayette acknowledged himself to rest; they had no personal acquaintance with him, and no association beyond their duty to aid him, if they could, as the friend and ally of their King. There was no reason why they should take into account his absence at that moment, beyond the military questions whether his instructions as Commander-in-Chief required them to do so, and whether his army would be a necessary addition to their strength. In the absence of instructions, and believing that the combined forces in Virginia were fully equal to the reduction of Lord Cornwallis, they wished to proceed. But La Fayette was the major-general commanding, and he stood firm in his decision to await the arrival of his chief, his patron, his steadfast friend.

Admiral de Grasse wrote, in reply to General Washington, upon the receipt of his letter of the 24th of August, that, although he had had it in mind to make the attack upon Yorktown with his own troops and those of the Marquis de La Fayette, he had yielded to the advice of General du Portail, and upon the receipt of that letter he had abandoned his intention and should await the arrival of those "generals whose experience in the profession of war, whose acquaintance with the country, and whose talents would greatly increase his resources."

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[1] To the Comte de Grasse, from King's Ferry, 24th August, and from the Head of Elk, 6th September, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 147 and 155.

The admiral could not supply him with the vessels he required, because the French ships of the line were too large to go up the bay, and his four frigates were occupied in blockading the James River. Comte de Grasse to Genl. Washington, from Cape Henry, 2d September, 1781: Washington Papers, Department of State.

As soon as it had been ascertained that the ships of Admiral de Grasse were in Chesapeake Bay, La Fayette wrote to General Washington, from Holt's Forge, on the 1st of September,[1]—

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—From the bottom of my heart I congratulate you upon the arrival of the French fleet. Some rumours had been spread, and spy accounts sent out, but no certainty until the admiral's despatches came to hand. Inclosed I send you his letter, and that of M. de St.-Simon, both of whom I request you will have translated by Tilghman or Gouvion alone, as there are parts of them personal, which I do not choose to shew to others. Thanks to you, my dear General, I am in a very charming situation, and find myself at the head of a beautiful body of troops; but am not so hasty as the Count de Grasse, and think that, having so sure a game to play, it would be madness, by the risk of an attack, to give anything to chance.

"It appears Count de Grasse is in a great hurry to return; he makes it a point to put upon my expressions such constructions as may favour his plan. They have been pleased to adopt my ideas, as to the sending of vessels into the James River, and forming a junction at Jamestown. I wish they may also force the passage at York, because then his lordship has no possibility of escape.

"The delay of Count de Grasse's arrival, the movement of the grand army, and the alarm there was at York, have forced me, for greater security, to send a part of the troops to the south side of James River. To-morrow and the day after will be employed in making dispositions for covering a landing, which will be done with continentals discumbered of baggage; and on the 5th, agreeable to the Count's desire, a junction will be made of our troops. I shall then propose to the French general the taking of a safe position, within ten or twelve miles of York; such a one as cannot be forced without a much greater loss than we could suffer. And, unless matters are very different from what I think they are, my opinion is, that we ought to be contented with preventing the enemy's forages, and fatiguing them by alarming their picquets with militia, without committing our regulars.

"Whatever readiness the Marquis de St.-Simon has been pleased to express to Colonel Gimat, respecting his being under

[1] La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 435.

me, I shall do nothing without paying that deference which is due to age, talents, and experience; but would rather incline to the cautious line of conduct I have of late adopted. General Portail must be now with Count de Grasse. He knows your intentions, and your course will be consulted in our movements.

"Lord Cornwallis has still one way to escape; he may land at West Point and cross James River some miles below Point of Fork; but I thought this part was the most important, as the other route is big with obstacles. However, to prevent even a *possibility*, I would wish some ships were above York.

"The Governor[1] was with me when the letters came; he jumped upon a horse, and posted off to his Council. I gave him a memorandum, demanding provisions of every kind for the fleet and the combined army. We may depend upon a quantity of cattle, but flour onght to be sent from Maryland and Pennsylvania. Chevalier d'Annemours, the French consul, is here, and will take a method to have his countrymen supplied without starving us.

"Upon a particular inquiry of the country, and our circumstances, I hope you will find we have taken the best precautions to lessen his lordship's chances to escape; he has a few left, but so very precarious, that I hardly believe he will make the attempt; if he does, he must give up ships, artillery, baggage, part of the horses, all the negroes; he must be certain to lose the third of his army, and run the greatest risk to lose the whole without gaining that glory which he may derive from a brilliant defence.

"Adieu, my dear General, the agreeable situation I am in is owing to your friendship, and is, for that reason, the dearer to your respectful servant and friend,

"LAFAYETTE."

Almost at the same time, General Washington was writing to him from Philadelphia,[2] "Nothing could have afforded me more satisfaction than the information, communicated in your two letters of the 21st and 24th ultimo, of the measures you had taken, and the arrangements you were making, in consequence of the intelligence I had given you." As he had received no intelli-

[1] Governor Nelson, of Virginia.

[2] 2d September, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 150.

gence of the arrival of M. de Grasse, which he was looking for with intense anxiety as the indispensable condition of success in this venturesome change of base, the Commander-in-Chief, far from imagining that the fleet was already in the bay and that the French commanders were urging an immediate attack, added, in his letter, "But, my dear Marquis, I am distressed beyond measure to know what has become of the Count de Grasse, and for fear that the English fleet, by occupying the Chesapeake, towards which my last accounts say they were steering, may frustrate all our flattering prospects in that quarter. I am also not a little solicitous for the Count de Barras, who was to have sailed from Rhode Island on the 23d ultimo, and from whom I have heard nothing since that time. Of many contingencies we will hope for the most propitious events. Should the retreat of Lord Cornwallis by water be cut off, by the arrival of either of the French fleets, I am persuaded you will do all in your power to prevent his escape by land. May that great felicity be reserved for you."

That felicity was, indeed, reserved for La Fayette, and it was one of the proudest recollections of his life.

Washington's courageous heart had not failed him in the midst of the anxiety and suspense by which he was distressed at Philadelphia; nor was his determination weakened, even for a moment, as to the task he had begun. He ended his letter to La Fayette with these memorable words: "You see how critically important the present moment is. For my own part, I am determined still to persist, with unremitting ardor, in my present plan, unless some inevitable and insuperable obstacles are thrown in the way."

The circumstances under which the fleet of Admiral de Grasse left the West Indies and took possession of Chesapeake Bay were exceedingly fortunate for the interests of America in regard to the opposing British

fleet under Admiral Rodney, then cruising in the West India waters. The British admiral had had information of the intended movements of the French fleet, and he knew that it was the purpose of the Comte de Grasse to sail for the coast of North America during the hurricane months of that year. But when the Comte de Grasse sailed from Cape Français, in August, he had so large and valuable a convoy of homeward-bound French trading-vessels under his protection which had collected at the Cape, that Admiral Rodney did not imagine he would detach any considerable number of his ships to the Chesapeake, or that he would separate himself from his convoy until it had safely arrived in some French port. Therefore, whilst the Comte de Grasse, after having protected his convoy until it was upon the high seas well out of the track of British cruisers, had suddenly shaped his course for the North American coast with twenty-eight large ships of the line and the accompanying frigates, Admiral Rodney, still confident that he should retain the naval superiority and protect British interests upon the continent, sent Sir Samuel Hood, with fourteen ships of the line, to join the squadron at New York. Sir Samuel Hood made the land a little south of the Capes of Virginia on the 25th of August, a few days before M. de Grasse reached there; but, finding no vessels in that vicinity, he continued northward, and arrived at Sandy Hook on the 28th. He found Admiral Graves, who had recently succeeded Admiral Arbuthnot, in command of the British squadron in New York harbor, consisting of seven ships of the line, of which only five were fit to go to sea; the other two had lately been damaged and were undergoing repairs.

Upon the same day that he arrived there bringing the news that the Comte de Grasse was to be expected upon the coast at any time, intelligence was received from Newport that the fleet of M. de Barras had put to sea from

that harbor on the 25th of August. This seemed to the British commanders an opportunity to strike a damaging blow at the French naval armament in America; for with the five ships from New York, added to the squadron brought by Sir Samuel Hood, they would have a fleet of nineteen ships of the line, which was vastly superior to that of M. de Barras, and presumably also to that of the Comte de Grasse. Therefore Admiral Graves, who was the senior officer and who assumed command, made haste to go to sea from New York, without waiting for the two ships which were being repaired, in the hope that he should fall in with the French squadrons separately and beat them in detail. He proceeded immediately to the mouth of the Delaware River, where he made a search with his frigates, but, finding no traces of the enemy, he continued to Chesapeake Bay; there he discovered the Comte de Grasse's fleet, on the morning of the 5th of September, and, not suspecting its strength, he entered to offer it battle. Thereupon Admiral de Grasse slipped his cables and bore out of the bay in order to obtain more sea-room and to avail himself of his superiority of numbers. Both fleets steered to the eastward until they were clear of the Capes, when Admiral Graves made the attack and opened an engagement which lasted from four o'clock in the afternoon until dark. It resulted in considerable damage to both contestants, though it gave no decided victory to either; but it left Admiral Graves so much disabled that he was not in condition to renew the action upon the following day. The Comte de Grasse, who had gained the weather-gage, had it in his power to continue the engagement if he chose to do so; but, in view of the prospect of capturing Lord Cornwallis, he was unwilling to put anything to risk, and, having driven the British fleet off, which was all that he required in order to accomplish his purpose, he returned on the 10th of September to Chesapeake Bay, where, to his great satisfaction, he

found that Admiral de Barras had arrived safely during his absence. Admiral Graves reconnoitred the French position; but, several of his ships having been badly damaged in the action, one of them, the Terrible, so much so that she had to be abandoned and set on fire, and discovering that M. de Grasse's ships blocked the entrance, he held a council of war and returned to New York. Lord Cornwallis was then doomed.

Admiral de Barras had with him, besides the ships of the line from Newport, fourteen transport-vessels loaded with the military stores and the heavy siege-artillery which had been brought from France by the Comte de Rochambeau's expedition. The transports having been unloaded and the artillery made ready to be placed in position to commence the operations against Yorktown, the admiral was enabled to furnish the vessels which General Washington had asked for to bring his army down the bay, but which M. de Grasse had not been able to spare; and he sent them at once to the Head of Elk.

General Washington had left Philadelphia on the 5th of September for the Head of Elk, and it was upon his journey that day, at Chester, that he received "the agreeable news of the safe arrival of the Count de Grasse in the Bay of Chesapeake with 28 sail of the line and four frigates."[1] The receipt of that intelligence marks an epoch in the history of the Revolutionary War, and occasioned one of the most exultant moments in the life of General Washington. After that the course of military events ran on with a smoothness and a precision never before known in the Continental army. The event is reported by those who were present to have produced an outburst of joy upon the part of the Commander-in-Chief which no one, up to that time, had sus-

[1] Washington's Journal, 5th September, 1781. Also General Washington to Congress, the same day, 3 P.M.: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 153.

pected him to be capable of. Standing on the river bank at Chester, he waved his hat in the air as the Comte de Rochambeau approached, and, with many demonstrations of uncontrollable happiness, he announced to him the good news. The Duc de Lauzun says,[1] "Je n'ai jamais vu d'homme pénétré d'une joie plus vive et plus franche que le fût le général Washington;" and Colonel Guillaume de Deux-Ponts declared that, instead of the reserved and exceedingly dignified manner of the Commander-in-Chief to which they had grown accustomed, they then saw his face beaming with delight, and "a child whose every wish had been gratified could not have expressed a keener joy."

On the following day General Washington reached the Head of Elk, whence he wrote to the Marquis de La Fayette,[2] "I have received with infinite satisfaction the information of the arrival of the Count de Grasse; and have an additional pleasure in finding, that your ideas on every occasion have been so consonant to my own, and that by your military dispositions and prudent measures you have anticipated all my wishes. Every thing has hitherto succeeded agreeably to my desires and expectations."

The difficulties of supplying the army with provisions after its numbers had been increased by the Marquis de Saint-Simon's troops were exceedingly great. They were occupying La Fayette, who, by the most strenuous efforts and by earnest and repeated appeals to the State Government, succeeded in obtaining barely enough food for the men to live upon, the newly-arrived French regulars cheerfully sharing the privations of the soldiers whom they had come to aid. On the 8th of September, after establishing himself at Williamsburg, La Fayette reported to General Washington as follows:[3]

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[1] Mémoires de Lauzun, p. 367.

[2] 7th September, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 156.

[3] La Fayette's Memoirs, American edition, i. 440 and 530.

"I had the honour to write you lately, giving an account of everything that came within my knowledge. I was every hour expecting I might be more particular; but if you knew how slowly things go on in this country; still I have done the best in my power; I have written and received twenty letters a day from government and from every department. The governor does what he can; the wheels of his government are so very rusty that no governor whatever will be able to set them free again. Time will prove that Jefferson has been too severely charged.

"The French troops, my dear General, have landed with amazing celerity; they have already been wanting flour, meat and salt, not so much, however, as to be one day without. I have been night and day the quarter-master collector, and have drawn myself into a violent head-ache and fever, which will go off with three hours' sleep, the want of which has occasioned it. This, my dear General, will apologize to you for not writing with my own hand.

"The French army is composed of the most excellent regiments: they have with them a corps of hussars, which may be of immediate use. The general and all the officers have cheerfully lived in the same way as our poorly provided American detachment. I think a letter from you on the subject will have a very good effect. Last night, by leaving our own baggage, and accepting of our officers' horses, we have been able to move to a position near Williamsburg; it is covered along the front with ravines; the right flank is covered by a mill pond, on the road to Jamestown; the left by Queen's Creek, small rivulets and marshes. We have militia still in front of our right and left, and a good look-out on the river. Our provisions may come to the capital landing. Williamsburg and its strong buildings are in our front. I have upon the lines General Muhlenberg with one thousand men, four hundred of whom are Virginian regulars, and one hundred dragoons. In borrowing White's unequipped horses we may add one hundred hussars. There is a line of armed ships along James River, and a small reserve of militia, which may increase every day; there are in Gloucester County eight hundred militia driving off stock.

"I had recommended, with proper delicacy, to Count de Grasse to send some naval forces up York River; the French armed vessels in Pamunkey are come down to West Point. No movement of Count de Grasse has as yet taken place, except some ships below York. Your Excellency's letter to him has been duly for-

warded; we are under infinite obligations to the officers and the men for their zeal.

"I entered into these particular accounts, my dear General, in order to show you that propriety, and not the desire to advance, has dictated our measures. We will try, if not dangerous, upon a large scale, to form a good idea of the works; but, unless I am greatly deceived, there will be madness in attacking them now with our force. Marquis de St.-Simon, Count de Grasse and General du Portail, agree with me in opinion; but should Lord Cornwallis come out against such a position as we have, everybody thinks that he cannot but repent of it; and should he beat us, he must soon prepare for another battle.

"Now, my dear General, I am going to speak to you of the fortifications at York. Lord Cornwallis is working day and night, and will soon work himself into a respectable situation; he has taken ashore the greater part of his sailors; he is picking up whatever provisions he can get. I am told he has ordered the inhabitants in the vicinity of the town to come in, and should think they may do him much good. Our present position will render him cautious, and I think it a great point. . . .

"I beg leave to request, my dear General, in your answer to the Marquis de St.-Simon you will express your admiration at this celerity of their landing and your sense of their cheerfulness in submitting to the difficulties of the first moments. Indeed I would be happy something might also be said to Congress on the subject.

"Your approbation of my conduct emboldens me to request that Gen. Lincoln will of course take command of the American part of your army; the division I will have under him may be composed of the troops which have gone through the fatigues and dangers of the Virginia campaign; this will be the greatest reward of the services I may have rendered, as I confess I have the strongest attachment to these troops."

General Washington left the Head of Elk in advance of his troops, and proceeded, in company with the Comte de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Chastellux, by way of Baltimore, to visit his estate at Mount Vernon, which he had not seen since he left it at the beginning of the war. He reached there on the 9th of September, and remained until the 12th, when he set out again upon his

journey toward the seat of active operations.[1] He wrote to the Marquis de La Fayette on the 10th, from Mount Vernon, to announce his arrival there with M. de Rochambeau, and to say to him that they should be at New Castle on the 13th, and that they expected to see La Fayette at his encampment in Williamsburg on the following day. Accordingly, La Fayette had the joy of seeing the Commander-in-Chief on the 14th of September at his own quarters, and of realizing at last his earnest hope that some day General Washington would command the whole of the allied forces in Virginia and conduct the operations in person.[2]

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[1] General Washington's Journal, 9th September, 1781.

[2] Colonel Butler's account of this meeting is as follows:

"Sept. 14th—The Marquis Lafayette still continues ill of the ague.

"Yesterday the Marquis de St. Simon, and a number of his officers, paid a visit to our line, and the Baron Steuben and our good friend Gen. Wayne, whose wound and gout still continue ill.

"About 3 o'clock an express arrived, announcing the approach of our great and good Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Washington, and the Count de Rochambeau, the commander of the allied armies of France, now joining.

"At 4 P.M., the guns fired a royal salute as the General approached the camp, on which the two armies turned out on their battalion parades;—his Excellency and the Count De Rochambeau, with their suites, attended by the Marquis de Lafayette, Maj. Gen. and commander of the American, and Maj. Gen. Marquis de St. Simon, commander of the allied army (lately arrived), and all their suites, visited the allied army first, and then the American army, and were saluted according to custom; these ceremonies finished, the whole of the officers of the French army attended at the Marquis de St. Simon's quarters and were introduced to the *Illustrious Hero*. The field officers of the American army all attended to bid him and other Generals welcome.

"These ceremonies over, an elegant supper was served up, and the following great personages and officers supped together in the utmost harmony and happiness, viz—His Excellency; the Count de Rochambeau, commander of the allied army; Maj. Gen. Marquis de Lafayette, commander of the army in Virginia; Maj. Gen. Marquis de St. Simon, commander of the allied army in Virginia; Maj. Gen. Baron de Steuben, Inspector General of the American army; Count Dumas (an officer of distinction in the French Guards, and one of the aids of Rochambeau); Count de Damas, another of his aids; Count ———, aid to Marquis de St. Simon; Brig. Gen. Hand, Adj't Gen. of the American army; Cols. Butler and Stewart, of Pennsylvania; Col. Trumbull, His Excellency's secretary; Col. Cobb, one of his aids; Lt. Col. Smith, another of his aids, with a number of other officers;

This was, of course, the end of the Marquis de La Fayette's independent command. In the operations which followed until the fall of Yorktown and the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, he resumed his position as major-general in command of a division of light infantry in the Continental army; and in that capacity he continued to serve the United States with the same devotion and gallantry that he had shown throughout the war.

His personal influence was called into play almost immediately, in connection with the negotiations which were carried on between the commanders of the allied forces. Just as he had formerly been, at Newport, in some sense, the ambassador from the army to the Comte d'Estaing, so he became the envoy from General Washington's camp to the flag-ship of Admiral de Grasse; for a small cloud had appeared upon the horizon hitherto so bright with promising anticipations. General Washington, accompanied by the Comte de Rochambeau, the Chevalier de Chastellux, General Knox, and General du Portail, had left Williamsburg, three days after his arrival there, to visit Admiral de Grasse aboard his ship, the Ville de Paris, lying off Cape Henry; and, after a cordial reception and a most agreeable interview, he returned to his headquarters on the 22d of September. Upon his arrival there he found letters awaiting him which contained

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also Col. ——, commanding the Regiment Gatinais, and many other Cols. and Lt. Cols., and other officers of the allied army. To add to the happiness of the event and evening, an elegant band of music played an introductive part of a French Opera, signifying the happiness of the family, when blessed with the presence of their father, and their great dependence upon him.

"About 10 o'clock the company rose up, and after mutual congratulations and the greatest expression of joy, they separated.

"Sept. 15—This day his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, dined with the Marquis de Lafayette, also Marquis de St. Simon, Baron de Steuben, Count de Rochambeau, Dumas, and Desandroins, a number of American and French officers of distinction, and passed the afternoon in the greatest happiness and harmony." See Colonel Richard Butler's Journal: The Historical Magazine, vol. viii. p. 102.

information that the British Admiral Digby had arrived at New York with a reinforcement of six ships of the line,—intelligence which he considered of such importance that he immediately despatched one of M. de Rochambeau's aides with it to the Comte de Grasse.

This news had an unexpected effect upon the French admiral: it caused him to hesitate in the execution of the plans he had agreed upon with General Washington, by which he had engaged to defend Chesapeake Bay against the British naval forces whilst the combined armies of the allies were operating against Lord Cornwallis. Indeed, he concluded that he could no longer continue to hold his position there; and in his reply to the Commander-in-Chief he said that, as the enemy's naval strength was then nearly equal to his own, he should put to sea in order to be ready to meet the British fleet if it should appear off the coast of Virginia and to fight it to greater advantage than if he were confined within the waters of the bay: he proposed leaving two vessels at the mouth of York River and a few frigates which had been blockading the river James, and frankly admitted that the issue of a combat might force him to the leeward and prevent his returning to the Chesapeake.

Such a movement would have deprived General Washington of the very support upon which he had relied when he undertook to transport his army from the Hudson River to Virginia, and would have thrown open the entrance to the Chesapeake for the relief of Yorktown, of which he believed the British would instantly avail themselves. M. de Grasse's proposal was received by the Commander-in-Chief with a feeling not far short of consternation.

He wrote to the Comte de Grasse one of the most impressive and most convincing letters to be found in the whole of his voluminous correspondence during the War of Independence; and he intrusted it to the hand of the

faithful Marquis de La Fayette to bear to the admiral, with the assurance that his messenger would present also his own earnest appeal, not only as an American officer but as a Frenchman, to the Comte de Grasse, to dissuade him from an undertaking of such threatening import to the Continental arms.

"I cannot conceal from your Excellency," he said at the beginning of his letter, "the painful anxiety under which I have labored since the receipt of the letter, with which you honored me on the 23d instant. The naval movements, which your Excellency states there as possible, considering the intelligence communicated to you by Baron de Closen, make it incumbent upon me to represent the consequences that would arise from them, and to urge a perseverance in the plan already agreed upon. Give me leave, in the first place, to repeat to your Excellency, that the enterprise against York, under the protection of your ships, is as certain as any military operation can be rendered by a decisive superiority of strength and means; that it is in fact reducible to calculation; that the surrender of the British garrison will be important in itself and its consequences; and that it must necessarily go a great way towards terminating the war, and securing the invaluable objects of it to the allies.

"Your Excellency's departure from the Chesapeake, by affording an opening for the succour of York, which the enemy would instantly avail themselves of, would frustrate these brilliant prospects; and the consequence would be, not only the disgrace and loss of renouncing an enterprise, upon which the fairest expectations of the allies have been founded, after the most expensive preparations and uncommon exertions and fatigues, but perhaps the disbanding of the whole army for want of provisions."

He besought him at least to cruise within view of the Capes, in order to prevent the entrance of British vessels.[1]

La Fayette duly presented this letter to the French admiral on board the Ville de Paris; and upon his return to the camp he had the extreme satisfaction of announcing

[1] See the Comte de Grasse's letter, Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 528; and General Washington's reply, Ibid., 163.

to General Washington that the Comte de Grasse, after having submitted the question to a council of war attended by all his commanders, had decided to remain within the Capes and to blockade the bay during the siege of Yorktown.

The American and French troops having in the mean time arrived at Williamsburg from the Head of Elk, General Washington now decided to advance upon the British position. He marched from Williamsburg on the 28th of September with the whole army, and took a post about two miles from York,—the French having taken the direct road to that town, by the "Brick House," and the Americans having filed to the right to Munford's Bridge.

At noon the heads of columns arrived upon their respective grounds and drove in the enemy's pickets, after which they lay upon their arms that night. On the following day, the 29th, the American troops were thrown more to the right and took their ground in front of the enemy's position, occupying the east side of Beaver Dam Creek, with a morass in front about a cannon-shot from the British lines. The left wing of the American army, composed of the French troops, encamped upon the west side of the creek. Early in the morning of the 30th it was discovered that the enemy had evacuated all their exterior works and had withdrawn to those near the town. This gave the allied armies a very advantageous position, and the investment was complete except upon the York River above the town, from which direction, however, the enemy could not expect to receive any succor.

There remained now less than three weeks to Lord Cornwallis before his surrender, during which time he was allowed no respite from the attacks of the allied forces, which continued to press him with greater vigor every day and to draw closer and closer to his lines.

The first week in October was spent by General Washington's troops in disembarking their military stores and mounting their heavy siege-guns. This having been accomplished, the first parallel was opened on the night of the 6th, within six hundred yards of the British lines, whence the American and French artillery opened a fire which was increased in intensity during the next four days, until, by the 10th, it had become so heavy that the enemy withdrew their cannon from their embrasures, placed them behind the merlons, and scarcely fired a shot during the whole day.[1] In the mean time the shells from the allies' batteries were doing very great damage in the town.

On the night of the 11th the second parallel was opened, only three hundred yards from the enemy's works, the advance having been made with such secrecy, and so much sooner than the British had expected, that they did not suspect the movement until the morning light revealed to their pickets the men working in the trenches. The two parallels had been completed and occupied with very small loss to either the American or the French troops, and the fire of the besiegers now became destructive in the extreme.

There were two redoubts upon the enemy's left, advanced about three hundred yards from their line, which still remained in the possession of the British troops, whose firing from those points was annoying to the men in the trenches of the second parallel. The engineers having reported that these redoubts were sufficiently damaged to make an attack upon them practicable, General Washington determined to carry them by assault. The time set by him for this was the evening of the 14th of October; and its execution was intrusted to two detachments, one of American and the other of French troops.

[1] General Washington to Congress, 12th October, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 177. See also General Washington's Journal.

The French detachment, made up of the grenadiers and chasseurs, commanded by Major-General the Baron de Vioménil, was directed to capture the larger of the two redoubts; the smaller, which stood upon the extreme British left, was assigned to the Marquis de La Fayette with his light infantry. La Fayette's detachment was composed of four hundred men, from the battalions of Lieutenant-Colonel de Gimat, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton, Lieutenant-Colonel Barber, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens. The command of the whole advanced corps was given to Hamilton.

At the signal agreed upon, each detachment moved out to its respective duty. La Fayette's men, who had rushed forward, charging with their bayonets, were soon within the redoubt and had taken prisoners its defenders, Major Campbell, several subordinate officers, and forty-five private soldiers, without firing a single shot. The French detachment, having encountered a stronger opposition, had not so quickly accomplished their task, and La Fayette took advantage of that circumstance to recall a somewhat contemptuous remark made by its commander as to the American troops. Frenchman though he was, La Fayette would not tolerate a slight toward America or American soldiers, even from another Frenchman. The Baron de Vioménil had expressed some doubt at the outset whether La Fayette's troops would be able to perform the service required of them. Therefore, after his light infantry had made the assault with admirable courage, La Fayette, who had been somewhat nettled by the sarcastic tone of the French commander's remark, despatched an aide-de-camp immediately to announce with his compliments that the American troops were in possession of their redoubt, and to say that if M. de Vioménil required any help the Marquis de La Fayette would have great pleasure in assisting him.

The French soldiers performed their part, however,

with characteristic gallantry; and very shortly afterward they were in possession of the larger redoubt, which had been held by Lieutenant-Colonel McPherson with about one hundred and twenty British and Hessian troops.

General Washington was extremely well pleased with the conduct of the troops of both armies in this operation, by means of which he acquired a position whence his batteries could enfilade the enemy's whole line. He wrote to Congress, "Nothing could exceed the firmness and bravery of the troops. They advanced under the fire of the enemy without returning a shot, and effected the business by the bayonet only;" and in general orders he congratulated the army upon the success of the enterprise. He also requested the Baron de Viominil and the Marquis de La Fayette to accept his warmest acknowledgments for the excellence of their dispositions as well as for their own gallant conduct; and he begged them to present his thanks to every individual officer, and to the men, for the spirit and rapidity with which they advanced to the attacks assigned them and for the admirable firmness with which they supported them under the fire of the enemy, without returning a shot.

General de La Fayette's report to the Commander-in-Chief said,—

"Colonel Gimat's battalion led the van, and was followed by that of Colonel Hamilton, who commanded the whole advanced corps. At the same time a party of eighty men, under Colonel Laurens, turned the redoubt. I beg leave to refer your Excellency to the report I have received from Colonel Hamilton, whose well known talents and gallantry were on this occasion most conspicuous and serviceable. Our obligations to him, to Colonel Gimat, to Colonel Laurens, and to each and all the officers and men, are above expression. Not one gun was fired; and the ardor of the troops did not give time for the sappers to derange the abatis; and, owing to the conduct of the Commanders and bravery of the men, the redoubt was stormed with an uncommon rapidity.

"Colonel Barber's battalion, which was the first in the supporting column, being detached for the aid of the advance, arrived at the moment they were getting over the works, and executed their orders with the utmost celerity. The Colonel was slightly wounded. The rest of the column, under Generals Muhlenberg and Hazen, advanced with admirable firmness and discipline. Colonel Vose's battalion displayed to the left, a part of the division successively dressing by him, whilst a kind of second line was forming columns in the rear. It adds greatly to the character of the troops, that, under the fire of the enemy, they displayed and took their ranks with perfect silence and order.

"Give me leave particularly to mention Major Barber, Division Inspector, who distinguished himself, and received a wound from a cannon ball.

"In making the arrangement for the support of the works we had reduced, I was happy to find General Wayne and the Pennsylvanians so situated as to have given us, in case of need, the most effectual support." [1]

An accusation, which has since been abundantly disproved, was made at the time, by the enemies of America, against the honor of both General Washington and the Marquis de La Fayette in connection with the storming of these redoubts, and it was incorporated by Mr. Gordon in his History of the American War. It stated that the Marquis de La Fayette had issued an order, under the approbation of General Washington, that every man in the redoubt, after its surrender, should be put to the sword; an act of inhumanity so foreign to the well-known character of both those officers that fair-minded people could not for a moment entertain the idea of the truth of such an assertion. Nevertheless, this calumny received an extraordinary currency even after the war, in consequence, no doubt, of the idea that the atrocities committed by the British under Benedict Arnold at Fort Griswold, and notably the assassination of Colonel Ledyard, as well as the death of Colonel Scammell at Yorktown under circumstances of great cruelty, had aroused a spirit of

[1] Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution, iii. 425.

retaliation in the American army. Mr. Justice Marshall tells us that there is no trace of any such order among the papers of General Washington;[1] and Colonel Alexander Hamilton, years afterward, made the following specific denial:

"*To the Editor of The Evening Post.*

"NEW YORK, August 10, 1802.

"SIR,—Finding that a story, long since propagated, under circumstances which it was expected would soon consign it to oblivion, (and by which I have been complimented at the expense of Generals Washington and La Fayette,) has of late been revived and has acquired a degree of importance by being repeated in different publications, as well in Europe as America, it becomes a duty to counteract its currency and influence by an explicit disavowal.

"The story imports in substance that General Lafayette, with the approbation or connivance of General Washington, ordered me, as the officer who was to command the attack on a British redoubt, in the course of the siege of Yorktown, to put to death all those of the enemy who should happen to be taken in the redoubt, and that, through motives of humanity, I forbore to execute the order.

"Positively, and unequivocally, I declare, that no such or similar order, was ever by me received, or understood to have been given, nor any intimation or hint resembling it.

"It is needless to enter into an explanation of some occurrences on the occasion alluded to, which may be conjectured to have given rise to the calumny. It is enough to say, that they were entirely disconnected with any act of either of the generals who have been accused.

"With esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"A. HAMILTON."[2]

On the night of the 15th of October Lord Cornwallis made an attempt to relieve his position by a sortie, which resulted in nothing more than the entrance of the British sallying party into one of the American and one of the

[1] Life of Washington, iv. 486.

[2] Hamilton's Life of Hamilton, vol. i. chap. xiv.

French batteries in the second parallel, and the hasty spiking of a few cannon which were almost immediately afterward repaired and turned against the enemy's works. The situation of the British had become desperate; their works were crumbling under the cannonade of the allied armies, not a gun could be fired from them, and the ammunition was almost expended; the fortifications were assailable in many places, and it was the opinion of the engineers and the chief officers of the army that, if the same fire should continue a few hours longer, it would be madness to attempt to maintain them with the present garrison.

Therefore, after an ineffectual attempt to escape by water, with the not very promising hope, under the most favorable circumstances, of pushing northward through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, to unite with Sir Henry Clinton in New York, Earl Cornwallis sent the following letter to General Washington on the 17th of October:

"SIR,—I propose a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours, and that two officers may be appointed by each side, to meet at Mr. Moore's house, to settle terms for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloucester."

To this General Washington replied at once,—

"An ardent desire to spare the further effusion of blood will readily incline me to listen to such terms for the surrender of your posts of York and Gloucester, as are admissible.

"I wish, previously to the meeting of the commissioners, that your Lordship's proposals in writing may be sent to the American lines; for which purpose a suspension of hostilities, during two hours from the delivery of this letter, will be granted."

Commissioners were immediately appointed to draw up the articles of capitulation, the Vicomte de Noailles and Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens upon the American side, Lieutenant-Colonel Dundas and Major Ross on the part

of the British army; and on the 19th of October Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the combined forces of France and America.

This announcement was received with expressions of joy throughout America; and the Duc de Lauzun was despatched upon a frigate to carry the welcome news to France, where, in less than three weeks, it caused the streets of Paris and the avenues of Versailles to resound with triumphant congratulations.

The Marquis de La Fayette wrote, from the camp before Yorktown, to M. de Maurepas, the French Prime Minister,—

"The play is over, Monsieur le Comte, the fifth act has just come to an end. I was somewhat disturbed during the former acts, but my heart rejoices exceedingly at this last, and I have no less pleasure in congratulating you upon the happy ending of our campaign. I shall not describe it to you in detail, Monsieur le Comte, but leave that to Lauzun, for whom I wish as great success in crossing the ocean as he has had in overcoming Tarleton's legion.

"M. de Rochambeau will give you a report of the army which he commands; but, if the honor of having commanded for some time the division of M. de Saint-Simon were to give me the right to express my obligations to that general and to his troops, it would be infinitely gratifying to me to do so."

By the same opportunity he wrote to M. de Vergennes, both letters being carried by the Duc de Lauzun,—

"Accept my congratulations, Monsieur le Comte, upon the good pen which has at last been cut for politics. M. de Lauzun will give you all the details. I am happy that our Virginia campaign has ended so well, and my respect for the talents of Lord Cornwallis gives his capture an additional value to my mind. After this attempt, what English general will undertake the conquest of America? Their manœuvres in the southern country have not been more successful than those at the North, and now the experience of General Burgoyne has been repeated." [1]

[1] 20th October, 1781: Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 470.

The proposal made by Lord Cornwallis to General Washington for the surrender of the British army contained the stipulation that the garrisons of York and Gloucester should be prisoners of war, "with the customary honours," that is to say, with colors flying and drums beating,—which it appears the French and American general officers were inclined to concede. But the Marquis de La Fayette, remembering the indignity to which General Lincoln's troops were subjected by the British commander at the surrender of Charleston, insisted that the conditions which had then been imposed should be exacted now. General Lincoln had been obliged to march out with his colors cased, and had been forbidden to play either a British or a Hessian air. La Fayette begged that, in retaliation, the British troops should lay down their arms in the same manner, except that they should be *required* to play a British or a German air;[1] and General Washington, yielding to his desire, replied to Earl Cornwallis, "The same honours will be granted to the surrendering army as were granted to the garrison of Charleston."

The articles of capitulation, signed on the 19th of October by Lord Cornwallis and Thomas Symonds on behalf of the British army, and by General Washington, the Comte de Rochambeau, and the Comte de Barras, in his own name and in that of M. de Grasse, for the allied forces, contained this provision:

"The garrison of York will march out to a place to be appointed in front of the posts, at two o'clock precisely, with shouldered arms, colours cased, and drums beating a British or German march. They are then to ground their arms and return to their encampments, where they will remain until they are despatched to the places of their destination. Two works on the Gloucester side will be delivered at one o'clock to a detachment of French and American troops appointed to possess them. The garrison

[1] La Fayette's Mémoires historiques, i. 280.

will march out at three o'clock in the afternoon; the cavalry with their swords drawn, trumpets sounding, and the infantry in the manner prescribed for the garrison of York."

Lord Cornwallis excused himself upon the ground of illness from marching out at the head of his troops; and the surrender was made in his name by General O'Hara. The gratification of accepting it was conferred by the Commander-in-Chief upon Major-General Benjamin Lincoln, who received General O'Hara's sword, and, the formality being terminated, handed it back to him immediately.

The utmost courtesy was shown to the officers of the defeated army by those of the allied forces. General Washington, General de Rochambeau, and the Marquis de La Fayette sent their aides-de-camp, with their compliments, to Lord Cornwallis; and visits were exchanged between the British and the French and American generals, as La Fayette says, "with every sort of politeness, especially towards Lord Cornwallis, one of the men of the highest character in England, who was considered to be their foremost general."

The aide-de-camp whom La Fayette had sent to the British head-quarters was Major George Washington, nephew of the American Commander-in-Chief. Lord Cornwallis detained the young gentleman after the others had retired, saying that he had been contending for so long a time against the Marquis de La Fayette in this campaign that he desired to explain to him in detail the circumstances which led to his surrender, and he particularly wished him to understand that he had given up only when it had become impossible for him to hold out longer; and upon the following day, when General de La Fayette went himself to call upon Earl Cornwallis, the latter said to him, "I am aware of your humanity toward prisoners of war, and I commend to you my unfortunate army;" to which La Fayette replied, alluding to the

taking of General Burgoyne, "Your Lordship knows that the Americans have always been humane toward captured armies;" and he adds, relating this incident in his "Mémoires historiques,"[1] "In truth, the English army was treated with every possible consideration."

General Washington intended to take advantage of the success at Yorktown, and of the presence of the French naval armament, to extend his operations in the South and to make an immediate attack upon Charleston, the capture of which, as he said, would destroy the last hope which induced the enemy to continue the war. He hastened to present this plan of campaign to the Comte de Grasse, with the assurance that it now depended upon him to terminate the war by a campaign, both glorious and fertile in its consequences, by means of which the allies would be enabled to dictate the terms of peace when it should come to the making of a treaty. The opportunity seemed an extraordinarily promising one at that moment; for, as he said to M. de Grasse, it rarely happened that such a combination of means as were then in their hands could be seasonably obtained by the most strenuous human exertions,—a decisively superior fleet, an army flushed with success, demanding only to be led to new attacks, and the very season which was proper for operating against the points in question.[2] If the admiral should consider, however, that the expedition against Charleston was impracticable, he urged him to undertake one of minor importance, which might be carried out with infinitely less expense, though with results of great value to the American cause; namely, the capture of the enemy's post at Wilmington, in North Carolina. General Washington was about to send a reinforcement to General Greene, and he purposed to have that reinforce-

[1] Vol. i. p. 281.

[2] General Washington to the Comte de Grasse, 20th October, 1781: Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 186.

ment transported by sea, if possible, under convoy of the French fleet to Wilmington, in order to carry that post and liberate another State from British invasion.

The day after he had written the letter to M. de Grasse containing these propositions (the 21st of October), General Washington went aboard the flag-ship to pay his respects to the admiral and to thank him personally for the services rendered by himself and by the French fleet, returning ashore the same evening. He was accompanied upon this visit by the Marquis de La Fayette; and, as he intended to give the command of the expedition against Wilmington to La Fayette, he left him aboard the admiral's ship for further conference with the French officers, in the hope that he might induce the admiral to assist in the undertaking, to which the latter was disinclined because of the advancing season and his own pressing engagements in the West Indies.

General Washington's entry in his Journal under date of the 21st of October says, "Having promised the command of the detachment destined for the enterprise against Wilmington to the Marq's de la Fayette in case he could engage the Admiral to convey it & secure the debarkation, I left him on Board the Ville de Paris to try the force of his influence to obtain these."

La Fayette's mission was so far successful that when he returned to the head-quarters on the 23d he brought with him the assurance of Admiral de Grasse that he would undertake to transport to Wilmington a detachment of two thousand American troops; and preparations were made at once to embark General Wayne's and General Gist's brigades, with a proper force of artillery. The day of departure was to be the 1st of November, or sooner if possible.

But the admiral's position was an embarrassing one. He was bound by the duties of his service to be back in the West Indies at a certain date; he had come from

there with the promise that his expedition should be a short one, and he had brought with him, by the courtesy of the French and Spanish authorities, a detachment of troops whose presence would shortly become necessary in the garrisons to which they belonged. Added to this, news had been received that the British fleet at New York had passed out to sea, presumably for Chesapeake Bay; and it did appear, in fact, off the Virginia Capes on the 28th of October. Every new complication added to the present uncertainty of wind and weather with which M. de Grasse had to reckon in making the plans for fulfilling his engagements. He had already rendered distinguished service to the United States. He would gladly have carried the victorious American arms farther upon the road to conquest if his time had been unlimited and the means at hand had been his own. But, under the circumstances, he was forced to the conclusion that this could not be.

On the 26th of October he wrote to the Marquis de La Fayette, therefore,[1]—

"The more I reflect upon the plan which you mentioned to me, the more I see the impossibility of undertaking to transport troops, baggage, artillery, and ammunition. My ulterior operations require my return to an appointed place at a fixed day. That day approaches, and it would be impossible for me to break my engagement voluntarily. The passage from here to Cape Fear may possibly be made in two days, but it may also require more than fifteen. The debarkation of troops and stores may occasion delays and may expose me to censure. Besides, it might happen that, from an obstinate succession of southerly winds, I should be obliged to take the resolution of proceeding at once to my rendezvous. In that event I should be obliged to carry with me, during the whole campaign, a detachment of troops useful to the Continent, of which I should be very sorry to deprive it. Therefore, all that I can do is to promise to escort as well as I can the vessels which may have troops on board; but it will be

[1] MS. Letter, quoted by Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 193.

impossible for me to remain on the coast beyond the 8th of next month; and even this delay must be made up for by the utmost activity on my part. If you are deficient in the means of embarking or debarking, let us think no more of the measure. But do not attribute my refusal to anything but the impossibility of performing a service which is agreeable to you."

This letter was disappointing not only to the Marquis de La Fayette, but to General Washington also; though it must be admitted that the Comte de Grasse's argument was a good one and that he was moved to this conclusion by responsibilities of a very grave character. The delay of a week or more which resulted in the despatching of reinforcements to General Greene arose from the admiral's inclination to do what was asked of him, which, however, he found upon mature reflection to be too dangerous for him to undertake. The detachment for the South was, therefore, sent by land, because there were no transports to carry it, and the command was given to Major-General St. Clair.

This was the end of the military services of the Marquis de La Fayette in the American Revolution. He had been attached to the Continental army amid the varying fortunes of American independence since the day, four years before, when he leaped from his horse to rally the broken column at the battle of Brandywine. He had lived to see liberty assured to America; and, with the happiness which one feels in contemplating a task well done, his thoughts turned naturally to his own country and to his friends at home.

The campaign in Virginia being ended and the season well advanced, it was not likely that active military operations would be undertaken during the remainder of the year. La Fayette therefore obtained permission of General Washington to go to Philadelphia and to present himself to Congress with the request that he might be granted a leave of absence to spend the following winter

in France. Preparations were to be made for the opening of the next campaign, which would not only require considerable sums of money in the equipment and arming of the Continental troops, but were to be dependent upon that naval superiority which had been found so effective in the results speedily obtained at Yorktown. In view of this, and of the representations that must be made at the Court of Versailles, it appeared to the Marquis de La Fayette that, aside from the personal motives which induced him to apply for leave of absence, there was good reason for him to go at that time, because he was very likely to render greater service to the cause of the United States by being in France than by staying through the winter months in America.

He proceeded to Philadelphia and addressed his petition to Congress, in a letter dated the 22d of November, 1781. In reply to it, and upon the report of Mr. Carroll, Mr. Madison, and Mr. Cornell, a committee to whom it had been referred, his request was granted upon the following day, by a resolution expressing the warm gratitude of the people toward La Fayette, and the confidence with which Congress relied upon his zealous interest in our behalf as an accredited representative of the United States at the Court of Versailles. It is as follows:[1]

"*Resolved*, That major general the marquis de la Fayette have permission to go to France; and that he return at such time as shall be most convenient to him:

"That he be informed, that on a review of his conduct throughout the past campaign, and particularly during the period in which he had the chief command in Virginia, the many new proofs which present themselves of his zealous attachment to the cause he has espoused, and of his judgment, vigilance, gallantry and address in its defence, have greatly added to the high opinion entertained by Congress of his merits and military talents:

"That he make known to the officers and troops whom he

[1] Journals of Congress, 23d November, 1781.

commanded during that period, that the brave and enterprising services with which they seconded his zeal and efforts, and which enabled him to defeat the attempts of an enemy far superior in numbers, have been beheld by Congress with particular satisfaction and approbation:

"That the secretary of foreign affairs acquaint the ministers plenipotentiary of the United States, that it is the desire of Congress that they confer with the marquis de la Fayette, and avail themselves of his information relative to the situation of public affairs in the United States:

"That the secretary for foreign affairs further acquaint the minister plenipotentiary at the court of Versailles, that he will conform to the intention of Congress by consulting with and employing the assistance of the marquis de la Fayette, in accelerating the supplies which may be afforded by his Most Christian Majesty for the use of the United States:

"That the superintendant of finance, the secretary for foreign affairs, and the board of war, make such communications to the marquis de la Fayette, touching the affairs of their respective departments, as will best enable him to fulfil the purpose of the two resolutions immediately preceding:

"That the superintendant of finance take order for discharging the engagement entered into by the marquis de la Fayette with the merchants of Baltimore, referred to in the act of the 24th of May last.

"*Ordered.* That the superintendant of finance furnish the marquis de la Fayette with a proper conveyance to France:

"That the secretary for foreign affairs report a letter to His Most Christian Majesty, to be sent by the marquis de La Fayette."

The frigate Alliance, in which La Fayette had gone to France before, was placed again at his disposal, and he hastened to Boston, where the vessel was lying, to make his preparations for the voyage.

In the mean time, the achievements of General de La Fayette had been announced in France, after the rapid voyage made by the Duc de Lauzun, who carried the news of the surrender of Cornwallis; and his praise was heard upon all sides, in the city and at the Court. The King himself looked with such favor upon the services he had rendered to the allied armies of France and America,

and to the advancement of the common cause, that he remembered him with marked personal distinction, and in the list of rewards and promotions sent from the French War Department to the Comte de Rochambeau for distribution among the officers of his detachment who were held worthy of signal honor was the grade of maréchal-de-camp (corresponding to the rank of major-general in the Continental service) in the armies of France for the Marquis de La Fayette.[1]

There was also the following letter from the Marquis de Ségur, Minister of War, to General de La Fayette:[2]

"5th of December, 1781.

"The King having been informed, sir, of the military skill of which you have given repeated proof in the command of the various army corps intrusted to you in America, of the wisdom and prudence which have marked the services that you have performed in the interest of the United States, and of the confidence which you have won from General Washington, his Majesty has charged me to announce to you that the commendations which you most fully deserve have attracted his notice, and that your conduct and your success have given him, sir, the most favorable opinion of you, such as you might wish him to have, and upon which you may rely for his future good will. His Majesty, in order to give you a particular and flattering mark of favor, promises you the rank of Maréchal de Camp in his armies, to be enjoyed by you after the war in America shall be ended, at such

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[1] This list is given at length in the MS. Letter Books of General de Rochambeau, now in the Library of Congress, under the title of "Etat de Grâces que le Roi a bien voulu accorder à quelques officiers que M. le C^te^ de Rochambeau a recommandés dans son travail particulier."

The entry relating to M. de La Fayette is as follows:

M^is^ de La fayette, M^e^ de Camp commandant du Régiment du Roy Dragons.	Le grade de Maréchal de Camp à la fin de la guerre en Amérique lorsqu'il rentrera en service de France. Sa Majesté dispose de son Régiment.

The Marquis de La Fayette's regiment of the King's Dragoons was given to the Vicomte de Noailles.

[2] Correspondance de La Fayette, i. 473.

time as you shall leave the service of the United States to return to that of His Majesty.

"By virtue of this decision, you will be considered as Maréchal de Camp from the date of the surrender of General Cornwallis, after the siege of Yorktown, on the 19th of October of the present year, in view of the fact that you then held that rank in the army of the United States of America.

"His Majesty is about to dispose of his regiment of dragoons, the command of which he has reserved for you until now.

"I beg you to feel assured that I rejoice in this act of justice upon the part of His Majesty toward you, and of my wish to prove to you, upon every occasion, the sincere attachment with which I have the honor to be, etc.

"SÉGUR."

It is noteworthy in connection with this letter that it announces a mark of distinction conferred by the King of France upon an officer of the Continental army specifically for services rendered in America to the United States, and for having won the confidence and approval of General Washington in the command of American troops in the War of Independence. It is true that La Fayette was a French nobleman well known personally to the King, and it was not unnatural that his sovereign should feel kindly disposed toward him in the hour of triumph. But the case is remarkable of itself in the history of the United States, in which it probably has no parallel, especially as no mention was made of any service to the King's interests, of which many might have been cited in La Fayette's favor in connection with the expedition of the Comte d'Estaing as well as that of General de Rochambeau.

This young general of twenty-four was now returning home clothed with honor and glory. The powerful Secretary of State, the Comte de Vergennes, writing from Versailles to acknowledge the letters La Fayette had written in October upon the field of Yorktown, said to him, "Our joy is very great here and throughout the nation, and you may be assured that your name is held in ven-

eration. We recognize with pleasure that, although you had not the chief command in this great operation, your prudent conduct beforehand, and your preliminary movements, prepared the way for its success. I have been following you, M. le Marquis, step by step, throughout your campaign in Virginia; and I should frequently have been anxious for your welfare if I had not been confident of your wisdom. It required a great deal of skill to maintain yourself, as you did, for so long a time, in spite of the disparity of your forces, before Lord Cornwallis, whose military talents are well known. It was you who brought him to the fatal ending, where, instead of his making you a prisoner of war, as he probably expected to do, you forced him to surrender." [1]

General Washington, who had left Yorktown on the 5th of November for his own estate, had been detained at Mount Vernon by domestic affairs which prevented his going as early as he intended to do to Philadelphia, where he expected to see La Fayette and to say farewell to him before his departure. But, as he discovered that he should not be able to leave for the North until toward the end of November, and fearing that La Fayette would by that time have gone, he wrote him an affectionate letter from Mount Vernon, on the 15th,[2] in which he said,—

"I owe it to your friendship and to my affectionate regard for you, my dear Marquis, not to let you leave this country without carrying with you fresh marks of my attachment to you, and new expressions of the high sense I entertain of your military conduct and other important services in the course of the last campaign, although the latter are too well known to need the testimony of my approbation, and the former I persuade myself you believe is too well riveted to undergo diminution or change.

". . . If I should be deprived of the pleasure of a personal

[1] This letter, dated the 1st of December, 1781, is published in full by M. Doniol in his Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Etablissement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, iv. 687.

[2] Sparks, Writings of Washington, viii. 203.

interview with you before your departure, permit me to adopt this method of making you a tender of my ardent vows for a propitious voyage, a gracious reception from your prince, an honorable reward for your services, a happy meeting with your lady and friends, and a safe return in the spring to,

"My dear Marquis,

"Your affectionate friend,

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

La Fayette went aboard the Alliance in Boston harbor on the 21st of December, and on the 23d, as the ship was about to put to sea, he replied to General Washington,[1]—

"Adieu, my dear General: I know your heart so well that I am sure that no distance can alter your attachment to me. With the same candour, I assure you that my love, my respect, my gratitude for you, are above expression; that, at the moment of leaving you, I felt more than ever the strength of those friendly ties that for ever bind me to you, and that I anticipate the pleasure, the most wished for pleasure, to be again with you, and, by my zeal and services, to gratify the feelings of my respect and affection."

After a voyage of twenty-three days, the Marquis de La Fayette landed at L'Orient. He hastened from there to Paris and to Versailles, where he had the joy of being surrounded once more by his family and his friends, who received him with pride for his successes in America and with thankful hearts for his safe return to France.

Twice La Fayette came afterward to America. The first time was in 1784, when, yielding to his desire to see General Washington and to greet his companions in arms after the declaration of peace, he crossed the ocean and

[1] Correspondence, American edition, i. 448.

arrived in New York on the 4th of August. He was received everywhere by the people with cordial demonstrations of friendship and attachment. Having spent some happy days amid the delightful surroundings of Mount Vernon, whither he was conducted by General Washington, who had gone to Richmond to meet him, he revisited Williamsburg, Yorktown, and other points of interest in the Virginia campaign; he stopped at Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston upon his journey through the Middle States and New England; and he sailed for France from New York on the 25th of January, 1785.[1]

The second time was when he made his famous visit in 1824 and 1825, which has become part of the history of the United States. Invited by a resolution of Congress, which was conveyed to him in a personal letter from President Monroe, La Fayette, who was then advanced in years, and most of whose comrades in the struggle of the American Revolution had departed, came once more to visit the scenes of those actions of his youth which always revived in his mind the tenderest memories of sympathy and affection. He brought with him his son, M. George Washington La Fayette, to present him to the people whom he had helped to liberate; and, as the guests of the nation, they were met and entertained with enthusiastic expressions of good will such as have seldom been called forth in America. There are many persons yet living who remember how the citizens flocked to see him, to speak to him, to show him their children, and how the country resounded with the hearty greeting, "Welcome to La Fayette!"

During his visit, which lasted a little more than a year, he travelled through nearly every part of the United States then inhabited, in a progress which was like a triumphal procession. Upon setting out to return

[1] "Voyage aux Etats-Unis en 1784:" Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits, ii. 95–107.

to France, his heart was overflowing with gratitude, which he declared it would feel as long as it continued to beat; and his farewell to America was accompanied by his fatherly benediction upon the whole people of the United States, upon the Union, and upon the Federal Government.[1]

General de La Fayette died, at Paris, in the house which is now No. 8, rue d'Anjou, on the 20th of May, 1834, and was buried in the cimetière de Picpus, in the same tomb in which reposed the body of Madame de La Fayette, who died on the 24th of December, 1807.

[1] For a detailed account of this visit, see Lafayette en Amérique en 1824 et 1825, par A. Levasseur, Secrétaire du Général Lafayette pendant son voyage, Paris, 1829.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

A DISCUSSION OF THE MEASURES WHICH IT MAY BE PROPER FOR FRANCE TO TAKE IN REGARD TO ENGLAND, UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.[1]

31 August, 1776.

Every social institution has for its object to serve and preserve society; it is upon this basis that communities have been established, and it is only by acting with this in view that they are maintained and that they prosper.

The duty of every administration is, therefore, to seek to gain advantages for the community intrusted to its charge, and to ward off the dangers that may threaten it.

Of all the ills that can afflict society, war is one of the most serious; but it becomes the destroyer of society when it takes by surprise a state which, having reposed too great confidence in its own good faith and in the good faith of those who are envious of it, has neglected those precautions upon which its safety depends, and has let slip the opportunity of reducing its habitual enemy to a condition in which it would be impossible for him to injure it.

England is incontestably and hereditarily the enemy of France; jealous of her greatness, of the natural advantages of her soil and of her situation, all its efforts and all the resources of its own power have constantly been employed in attacking that of France, in creating enemies for her, and in arousing Europe against her. Hence the long and bloody wars of which we still feel the disastrous effects.

If the policy of England seems to-day less destructive, if it covers its ancient jealousy with a specious mask of friendship, this is not because it has changed its disposition or its principles, but because it is embarrassed by unhappy circumstances of which it cannot as yet foretell the outcome, and it is anxious lest France should seize this truly unique opportunity of avenging the injustice, the perfidy, and the outrages which she has too

[1] Etats-Unis, t. 1, No. 157: Doniol, La Participation de la France, i. 567.

often had to endure, and of putting it out of the power of England to commit any further such acts for a long time to come.

We may deceive ourselves if we flatter our minds with the idea that England, recognizing the beneficent moderation of the King, will show itself disposed in quieter times to act in conformity with that. For where shall we find the assurance of such a thing? It cannot be in the national character, which sees in the slightest glimmer of prosperity in France an unbearable evil. If England remains silent in view of the measures which it sees us taking to re-establish our navy and to increase our maritime importance, it looks nevertheless upon this quite natural precaution as a blow directed against that exclusive empire upon the seas which it arrogates to itself; and its resentment is restrained only by the danger or the impossibility of giving it free scope.

Its constant maxim is to make war upon us the moment it sees us preparing to compete on the ocean, and it is perfectly safe to predict that, with its strength restored, England will throw itself upon our shipping and will take the same advantages that it took in 1755.

What is to be expected from a nation which, in its most pressing necessity, and upon the eve of a crisis that may perhaps be fatal, disdains to reply to the complaints of, or to do justice to, a neighbor with whom at this moment it is especially to its interest to keep up friendly relations? What reparation have we obtained up to this time for the insults that have been openly and intentionally heaped upon us in India, or for the habitual disregard of our rights in Newfoundland? The cause of a great king is sent for trial before the tribunal of a company of merchants which is at once the judge and a party in interest. That is the way they do us justice in India. As to Newfoundland, they heap up contradictions, equivocations, and, in case of necessity, disavowals, in order to escape the fulfilment of a solemn treaty the stipulations of which are clear and precise. May we not also regard as a cause of complaint the ships which the English have ostentatiously sent to cruise before the entrances to our ports in America, and the acts of violence which they have committed in disregard of the respect due to the sovereignty of the King and to his flag?

Does England treat Spain better than it does France? Spain has just had a proof that the English are attempting, in time of absolute peace, to establish themselves in the midst of her possessions and to arouse the savage tribes against her. A quarrel has broken out in South America; Portugal, concealing its perfidy

under a pretended friendship and a desire for conciliation, has attacked Spain, has invaded her dominions, and justifies this act in a manner as insulting as it is insidious. In the present crisis through which England is passing, this foreign war quite ready to break out ought to be a source of alarm to it, and all its activity should be directed toward preventing this disturbance. It cannot abandon an ally whom it is more important to keep than a rich province would be; though if it wishes to retain this ally it must share his efforts and so possibly weaken itself in every direction, and in the mean time we see nothing but ambiguity both in its language and in its conduct. On the one hand England is increasing the number of its vessels doing guard duty,—which it believes to be an imposing object of terror; on the other, if it does not dare to avow openly the conduct of its ally, it justifies and excuses him with such bad reasoning that we may fairly doubt whether it seriously intends to appease this quarrel, or whether it does not mean to nourish it in the germ in order to employ its growth and development later for the purpose of its own ambition and convenience.

There is one consideration which has already been presented upon other occasions, and which it is indispensable to recall here. England is strongly armed by land and sea in America; it has an army and a numerous fleet equipped with all necessary appliances for rapid movement. At the same time, if it be unable to control the course of events, if the fortitude, the resolution, and the courage of the Americans overcome its plans and its efforts, ought we not to fear that the leaders of the administration, forced to abandon the subjugation of America, may seek to make up for the loss, or to modify the public feeling, by offering a compensation somewhere else? This can be obtained only at the expense of France and Spain, and it would not be difficult to prove beyond question that the conquest of our Islands would furnish them a very substantial compensation.

If various acts on the part of England have shown beyond doubt how little reliance is to be placed upon its sincerity or its honesty of purpose, yet we should perhaps not decide on that account that, in dealing with a Power whose faith is so doubtful, war is preferable to an unstable peace, which indeed is only to be compared to a truce of the most uncertain continuance. The purpose of these reflections is not to anticipate a decision which can emanate only from the wisdom of the supreme authority, but merely to present suggestions which may throw light upon it.

If we were to consider the advantages and the disadvantages

of making war upon England under the present circumstances, it would be easy to show that the advantages are so much the greater that there is no room for comparison. For, in fact, what more suitable opportunity could be selected by France to wipe out the shame of the odious surprise to which she was subjected in 1755, and of all the disasters which followed upon it, than the moment when England is engaged in a civil war a thousand leagues away from its base of government and when it has scattered the forces with which it should be able to protect its own territory? It might be objected to this that England's great naval force is still held in reserve in Europe; that is perfectly true, but the sailors who are necessary to man it are in America. The calculation is defective if it be based merely upon the seventy war-ships of various sizes which England has in service in that part of the world; for we must take into account more than four hundred transport-vessels which she could not recall and dismantle without taking from the army of occupation its place of refuge in case of disaster and leaving it in a short time without subsistence. If she endeavors to make up for the scarcity of men by impressment, then commerce will stop; and of all the evils that England has to fear, this is perhaps the most dangerous for her domestic peace and safety.

In view of the step just taken by the United Colonies in declaring their independence, there is little likelihood of a reconciliation unless some supernatural event should change the condition of things as well as of men's minds, and should either induce the Americans to submit to the yoke, or persuade the English to recognize that independence against which they have taken up arms. If the war continues between the insurgents and the English, all the advantages that enabled Great Britain so preeminently to make rapid conquests in the last war are now turned against it, and operate, though indirectly, in favor of France. It was not the strength of the English, it was that of the Americans, their soldiers and their sailors, which secured the enormous conquests of which France felt the humiliation so bitterly at the time, and of which she still feels in part the privation inflicted upon her.

The connection which war would establish between France and North America would not be one of those momentary unions that are formed and dissolved by the accident of circumstances. For, as no interest could divide two peoples communicating with each other only across a vast expanse of ocean, the necessary intercourse of trade that would grow up between them would form a

bond which, if not everlasting, would be at least of very long duration, and which, while it would animate and enliven French industries, would also turn into our ports those products which America sends out, more necessary than they are costly, but which she formerly shipped to England, and thus, nourishing by them the industries of that nation, contributed toward its elevation to the astonishing position of wealth which it has attained to-day. It is a double advantage when the increase of national labor tends at the same time to the weakening of a rival Power.

A disadvantage which might counterbalance all the benefits of a war against England under the present circumstances is that the war might be communicated to the Continent. This consideration is sufficiently important to merit discussion.

The only Powers which could perform this service for England, supposing she were able as well as willing to subsidize them, are the House of Austria, the King of Prussia, and Russia. The latter will not come to attack either France or Spain with her numerous armies; she might possibly make the vain show of sending out some vessels of war; but, constructed as these are, they would make more noise in the gazettes than they would do harm to the enemies of England. The most inconvenient and injurious diversion which that Power might make would be to open war upon Sweden. But at whatever period it should determine upon this undertaking we should have to prepare ourselves for war with England; for, if we attempted to give aid to our ancient ally, England would never, whilst she has existence, allow a French fleet to prescribe laws in the Baltic.

The alliance which has continued between France and Austria without any cause of interruption up to this time would seem to assure us, if not of the co-operation of our ally, at least of her neutrality.

The Empress-Queen's unbounded love of peace strengthens this deduction. That sentiment, which made her an accomplice in the injustice of the invasions against the Poles and the Turks, will restrain the ambitious desires of the Emperor as long as she lives.

A more certain guarantee, perhaps, that the House of Austria will not violate its neutrality, is its attitude of watchfulness toward the King of Prussia. The mutual distrust again aroused between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin seems likely to restrain them both and to prevent them from taking part in the war which might break out between the House of Bourbon and England.

This position gives rise to a reflection which is as decisive as it

is agreeable. France, Spain, and England are the only Powers in Europe able by their wealth to arouse the others and to sustain a long war. The other Powers may fight among themselves, but very soon the exhaustion of their resources will cause them, unless they are supported from without, to relax their efforts and to drop their arms. In view of the declared principles of the King, his most cherished purpose being to establish the glory of his reign upon a basis of peace and justice, it is certain that if His Majesty should seize a unique opportunity which may perhaps never offer again, and should succeed in dealing England a blow damaging enough to strike down its pride and to restrict its power within proper limits, he would be able to dictate peace for many years to come; and, exerting his authority then only to extend order and justice in every direction, he would attain the glory which is so precious to his heart, of being the benefactor not only of his own people but of all nations.

Holland is not to be counted among the Powers which attract the fire of war to the Continent. That Republic, removed from the position of importance which it occupied during the last wars of Louis XIV., seems to be solicitous only about its mercantile interests, and, since it has more cause than any other country to complain of the tyranny of the English in every part of the world, it is not to be supposed that it would regard their humiliation either with anxiety or with fear. It would soon understand that this was a war of reason and of self-preservation on the part of France rather than one of conquest or of ambition. Besides, the advantages which it might hope to gain from this war would be very unlikely to render it susceptible to the political views which England might try to present.

No mention has been made here of certain events which might happen in Europe, such as the death of the Empress-Queen, or of the Elector Palatine or the Elector of Bavaria, although the fact is admitted that these might produce important changes in the Continental system. As to the first of them, what has been said above in regard to the distrust of the Courts of Berlin and Vienna answers for that. As to the other two, they are connected with France only by political relations which it is in her power to strengthen more or less according to her choice and her convenience. But, even supposing that in this connection her interests were to sustain a temporary damage, provided that we should succeed in weakening the power of England and wresting from it the dictatorship which it has seized, this injury could be easily repaired.

It may possibly be feared that the jealousy of which France has always been the object may be aroused again, and that it may excite a general war. But if it be decided that war is right and necessary at this time, why should it not be brought about by Spain? She has neither a smaller interest, nor fewer motives, nor less cogent reasons, for declaring war, than has France. Is her quarrel with Portugal, are her claims against contraband and against the constant encroachments of the English, both on the north and the south of the line, treated with more justice in London than our complaints?

The King of Spain has seemed for a long time convinced that if he were to declare war against England it could be sustained by reason and justified by the law of nations. Besides, an attack upon Portugal may become inevitable; and then England will unquestionably declare itself.

Spain is less prominent in European affairs than we are, and, having less of common interest with the other Powers of the Continent, she is likely to excite less jealousy and less anxiety, and consequently less desire to obstruct her progress. In that event France would appear merely as an auxiliary; and whilst she redoubled her efforts, she would still play the part of a Power faithful and ready in fulfilling its obligations; for the obligations which unite her to Spain are capable of calling into play, in the course of their development, the entire strength of her resources. We should not regret turning them against Portugal any more than against England, because we have as much to complain of against the Court of Lisbon as against that of London, though we have much less to fear from it.

The fidelity of a zealous minister, and his oath, indeed, oblige him to present honestly and directly the advantages and disadvantages of such steps as circumstances may suggest to be taken. That is the purpose of this present memoir. This duty having been performed, it only remains for me to wait in respectful silence for whatever it shall please the King's high wisdom to decide. Nevertheless, if it were ever permissible to beg earnestly for a prompt decision, it would be so in cases where delays may be very dangerous, and where they may give rise to mistakes which, although involuntary, may be irremediable.

The measures to be taken for war and those for peace cannot be the same; it is necessary to have in either case a basis and a fixed rule of conduct. War calls for certain arrangements and preparations which cannot be completed in an instant; first of all a concert with Spain and plans to be agreed upon with her, and

subsequently certain changes and modifications in the instructions to the King's representatives at the principal Courts. No mention is made here of the collecting together of those various resources by which the measures to be undertaken may be successfully carried out, because the ministry is unfamiliar with their details, although these things have always formed an integral part of political management and are often, indeed, its chief source of action.

If, however, His Majesty prefers peace, even though it be unstable and of doubtful continuance, to a war that is justifiable upon the grounds both of reason and of necessity, it then remains for us to determine what measures shall be adopted to preserve his dignity whilst supporting such a peace, to protect the honor of the King and to retain our possessions beyond the seas. For I presume that no one will suggest the idea that we shall quietly abandon ourselves to the course of events and intrust the destiny of an important part of the kingdom to the caprice of mere chance. Shall we abandon our Windward and Leeward Islands to the mercy and discretion of the English, and permit that nation to seize them when it is forced in desperation to give up the American continent? Even if it were proved to us as clearly as the day that it will be impossible for us to defend and preserve them, but that we may as well conclude to give them up voluntarily, yet we owe it to our fidelity to the King, to our national pride, to our very honor, to make an effort to save them although we know beforehand that our effort must fail. To act otherwise would be to announce ourselves before the eyes of the nation, and of the whole universe, as traitors to the national cause. An administration is not responsible for the occurrence of events, but it is responsible for its own foresight, and it cannot be excused for having failed to see those things which it could have and ought to have anticipated.

If we confine ourselves merely to the protection of our territory, we shall still be obliged to send out war-ships and soldiers to accomplish this, and our attitude of defence will be almost as costly as actual war, without permitting us to avail ourselves of any of its opportunities or its advantages. If we remain passive spectators of the Revolution now going on in North America, shall we be able to continue inactive in view of the one that is preparing in Hindostan and which would prove as disastrous to our interests as that of America will probably be to England? For, the former having been once successfully accomplished, England will console itself by increasing tenfold its wealth and its

resources. We are still in time to prevent it; for the Indians know England as yet only through the tyranny of the Company and the oppression of its agents; but the time is approaching when these same Indians will learn the difference between being abandoned to the rapacity of a trading company and being governed under a mild and equable system. The year 1780 is the date of the expiration of the English Company's charter, and the Government has already given notice of its intention to appropriate all the Company's acquisitions. It would be very desirable to prevent the consummation of this project. M. de Sartine will explain to Your Majesty the true condition of things and the measures which it seems to call for.

APPENDIX B.

(FROM THE ORIGINAL LETTER IN THE POSSESSION OF JOHN HALE, ESQ.)

ALBANY, 2d Feb'y 1778.

DEAR SIR

I was greatly surprised a few days since on being informed that an Expedition was on Foot against Canada at this late Season, what the object is that Congress have in View, or their designs, I know not but from common Report, which says, is to destroy the shipping at St Johns, and to take Possession of Montreal. The Gentlemen who are to command the Troops on this Expedition, I am told are, the Marquiss de Faillitte and General Conway, the former I have not the honor of being acquainted with, the latter I believe is an Officer of Merit & Experience, but as both are entire Strangers to the Country, they can have but a faint Idea of the Difficultys they have to encounter in a Winter's Campaign, from the little Knowledge I have of the many difficultys enevitably attending the Expedition I will venture to presage it will miscarry, at least the Chances against its succeeding, are twenty to one; As my Opinion may appear singular I will give my Reasons for it.

I am told the Army is to be composed of a Brigade & three Regiments, in this Place & Vicinity, Hazen's Regiment and a number of Volunteers under General Starks, the whole supposed to be three thousand; These troops are most of them naked, and all destitute of the necessary Cloathing for the Climate they are going to, there is little or no Provission, and no Carriages col-

lected as yet for the Troops; of the former at least three months Stores will be necessary, of the latter not less than one thousand Sleighs, with two horses each, to carry the necessary Provissions, Forrage, Baggage &c, of the Army, a large Number of Snow Shoes, will be another indispensable Article, these and in short every other necessary for the Expedition are wanting which will render it one month too late, and for the moderate Season we have had, it is very probable the Ice on the Lake will not be Strong enough to cross, no other Road is left, but by the Way of Cahos & Missisque Bay. If the greatest dispatch is made it will be the latter end of March before the Troops are arrived in Canada. Heavy Artillery cannot be transported in the Winter, to surprise S^{t} Johns is an absurd supposition, I am told there is a Garrison of 500 men, if they do their duty ten thousand Men cannot take it with small Arms, & as the Shipping is under the Guns of the Fort, there will be no probability of destroying them.

If the design of Congress is only to take Possession of Montreal, I very much doubt if they will find it an Object worth the Expence. If any thing is expected from the favorable disposition of the Canadians, Arms and Amunition should be furnished them, of which they are destitute. It may be worth asking, if the Expedition against S^{t} Johns fails, how the Troops are to be supported in the Country? or how they are to return? As soon as the Lake is open the Ships command it, unless the Isle au Noix was fortified and boom'd which is not in our Power to do this Winter, the season will be too late for them to return on the Ice, I know no way they can effect a Retreat but by crossing the Country from the Missisque Bay to No. 4 or the Cahos. Their whole dependance for Provissions must be on what they carry (Flower excepted) as there is never any salted Provissions among the Inhabitants, and of fresh, they have been rob'd by the British Army even to their Milch Cows; but were Provissions Plenty, have they hard Money to purchase? I do not believe it can be obtaind without, but by Force & thereby disaffecting the Inhabitants. The above are Objections which appear to me insuperable, not to mention the Severity of the Climate & fatal Consequences of a Defeat, as well as the great Risk we run by leaving the North River defenseless & Fort Schuyler without Succor, should it be attacked.

What great Advantage shall we reap if the Expedition succeeds & we take Possession of S^{t} Johns & obtain the Command of the Lake? Have we any Reason to expect an Army that way another

year? I think not, the British Force in Canada at present is only sufficient to Garrison their Forts; the original Intention in sending an Army by the Way of Canada, was doubtless to avail themselves of the Assistance of the Canadians & Indians, the former they find, will not addopt their Tyrannic Measures, the latter, they can place no dependance on, as they ever desert them when their Services are most wanted. If it is alledged that the Troops sent on this Expedition, may be replaced by Malitia, would it not have been a more prudent Step to have reinforc'd General Washington with them, and enabled him to drive Mr. Howe & his Banditti from the Country, that, once done, Canada falls of course, probably without the Risk or Expence of an Expedition.

I am fully persuaded Congress have been precipitated into this Measure by disigning or ignorent men without having the necessary Information on so important an Affair.

I am this minute informd by a creditable Person, that Lake Champlain was not frozen ten days ago, the moderate Weather since, has doubtless prevented the Ice taking. As there is no probability of the Troops passing, and as a very considerable Body of them will soon be collected, will it not be worth while to turn their Arms against N: York the taking of which Place would doubtless be attended with happy Consequnces.

Please present my Compliments to Mr Duer if he has not left Congress.

I am very respectfully
Dr Sir
Your obt humble Servt
B. Arnold

I write to you as a Friend and beg you
will not make this letter publick as
it may give Umbrage to some.

Honble Govn Morris Esqr

APPENDIX C.

TESTIMONY OF THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE BEFORE THE COURT-MARTIAL HELD FOR THE TRIAL OF GENERAL CHARLES LEE.[1]

July 5th, 1778.

The Marquis de La Fayette being sworn:

Q. Were you with the troops under the command of General Lee the 28th of June?

A. I was.

Q. Did the troops under the command of General Lee make any attack on the enemy the 28th of June?

A. I went to General Lee in the afternoon of the 27th of June, and told him I wanted to be with him the next day; he answered that he was very glad of it. I asked General Lee if he had made any previous disposition of the troops. General Lee answered that he thought it would be better for the service to act according to circumstances. The morning of the 28th I sent at four o'clock to General Lee's quarters, to know if there was anything new; the answer I received was that one brigade was already marching. As I considered myself as a volunteer, I asked General Lee what part of the troops I was to be with? General Lee said, if it was convenient to me, to be with the selected troops. I put myself with them, in full expectation that these troops would act and be opposed to the British grenadiers. When we were on the march, having marched about one mile, General Lee sent orders to halt. I stopped some time; but being very impatient, I went to General Lee to know what was the matter. He answered, that all the intelligence did not agree together; and by his answers I saw that he could not be assured that the enemy were marching. However, after some time, we began to march again; we halted once more, and, I think, because General Lee received intelligence that the enemy were close by; and I saw some light horse of the enemy towards Monmouth Court-house. I sent my Aid-de-Camp to General Lee, to represent to him that the place where I was, the cannon and the troops were in a hole, in which it was impossible for us to do anything; General Lee answered that he did not care for that moment, but that he would provide for it. On the march, some troops were taken from General Wayne's detachment to go forward; and, as I was afraid of losing the opportunity of meeting the enemy, I desired General Foreman to point

[1] Lee Papers, New York Historical Society.

out to the detachment taken from General Wayne's detachment, a short road to go forward. Afterwards I marched again, and I saw one of General Lee's aids, who told me that the rear-guard of the enemy was ours; and General Lee himself, some time after, told me something like it in less positive terms. He desired me to tell at the head of Wayne's division, where Colonel Livingston's regiment was, to file off along the wood; and, upon my representation that the cannon could not pass, he told me that the cannon could go along the road. Some moments after General Lee told me that those should go along a fence that was upon our right. An Aid-de-Camp from General Lee told me that the enemy were gaining our right, and that I should prevent them by gaining their left. I went to General Lee, and I understood it was his intention. Then I found one of the columns under the fire of the enemy's artillery almost before the front. I told Colonel Livingston, that as soon as the other columns would form on my right, rather than to stay there still, it was better to go to take the enemy's batteries that were before us. I was surprized, then looking back, to see some of our troops forming towards the village of Freehold, as they were behind me. I was then told that the troops had been ordered to form there by General Lee, and supposed it was on account of the openness of the field, or the fear of being turned in flank. I rode, myself, to General Lee when Colonel Livingston was retiring; I found General Lee towards the village giving orders that the troops should take post farther back, and disposing some of them in the woods to annoy the enemy; then I saw all the columns of our troops going that way; I was then afraid, as these with whom I was were not going very fast, that the enemy would point some battery towards them. General Lee began to form some troops in that new position, and told me that I should take care of their right; then it was told to General Lee that some of the enemy were filing by their left, and General Lee ordered a new position to be taken back, and the cannon to be removed. While this was doing General Washington arrived. Afterwards I acted by direction of General Washington, and went to the command of the second line.

Q. Did the troops under the command of General Lee, to your knowledge, make any attack on the enemy the 28th of June?

A. I cannot say that I saw them make any attack on the enemy; I saw them setting out for that purpose, and I heard some noise of cannon; but cannot tell from which party they were fired.

Q. Were you with General Lee's troops from the time they set out to attack the enemy to the time they returned?

A. I was with General Lee's troops until General Washington came up. At that time I was remaining with a very small part of General Lee's troops.

General Lee's Question. If any attack had been made on the enemy, were you in a position that you could have seen it?

A. No.

General Lee's Question. From what you saw, and from everything that was done, had you not the greatest reason to conclude we either had attacked or put ourselves into such a situation to bring on their attack?

A. By what Mr. Malmedie told me, and you afterwards, my idea of the matter was such that you wanted to cut off a small part of the enemy's rear, and that nothing was to be feared but to lose time or ground; but that your intention was to cut off that part I could not judge but by what you said to me.

General Lee's Question. Did I not direct you to move with your corps towards the enemy in one particular direction, at the same time that I did another corps across a wood?

A. I received such orders for myself, but I know nothing about any orders the other corps received. I saw some other troops marching through the woods.

General Lee's Question. Do you recollect the particular words I made use of when I spoke of the party being ours?

A. The words were: My dear Marquis, I think those people are ours.

General Lee's Question. Did you observe in my voice, manner, appearance, air or countenance, that I was in the least disconcerted, or whether, on the contrary, I was not tranquil and chearful?

A. It seemed to me by your voice and features you were then as you are in general.

Q. What number of troops marched out under the command of General Lee the 28th of June to attack the enemy?

A. About thirty-three hundred, exclusive of Colonel Jackson's regiment, and General Varnum's and Scott's brigades.

Q. What troops marched in front?

A. The troops under the command of Colonel Durgee and Colonel Grayson.

Q. Did you receive any orders from General Lee to advance and attack the enemy with your detachment, or did you receive any orders from General Lee to retreat?

A. I received an order from General Lee to gain the left flank of the enemy. I was told that the orders for retreating came

officially from General Lee; when I arrived at Freehold, General Lee did not disapprove of it. All the other orders for retreating came from General Lee.

Question by the Court. Were the several corps that you have mentioned disposed so as to act collectively in support of each other; or were they separated by detachments?

A. When I was in the woods I could not see anything of the disposition. The part of the column I did see was together; for in the field I did not perceive any general compact plan, and the disposition at large, of General Lee, was not communicated to me.

Q. Did you gain the enemy's flank before you retreated?

A. I was going to do it, though I found there was not a good deal of time for doing it; but when I was at about the fourth part of what was necessary to be done, I saw that the other troops were going towards the village.

Q. Did you understand by their going towards the village that they were retreating?

A. I understood they were taking back a better position.

Q. When you retreated what distance were you from the enemy?

A. I was leading the column the nearest to the enemy, and there we had some killed by cannon shot.

Q. Could you estimate the number of the enemy from their appearance?

A. I could not see all, but I thought I saw about twelve hundred of them; their horse were covering their front.

Q. Were the enemy in motion at that time?

A. The enemy were marching towards us, and they were likely to make that movement which they make in all their actions to give jealousy to our right or left flank.

General Lee's Question. Did you not express your apprehension for our right flank?

A. I told you that there was a gentleman who had seen some troops going that way, and I told you to take care of it.

General Lee's Question. When you said you did not observe any compact plan, did you mean that the artillery did not, except when it was prevented by accidents, such as ammunition being expended or horses killed, support the battalions, and the battalions the artillery, with more regularity than could be expected in manœuvres of this kind?

A. My meaning was, that I did not see what was the disposition of the several corps. I did find some want in the artillery, but that might be owing to accidents.

General Lee's Question. Did I not express an intention of taking post in the rear of the ravine that crossed the plain, and for this purpose did I not detach you with a body of troops to take post in the village of Freehold, to see if the village would not cover our wing?

A. You pointed out to me the particular direction where the troops should go; you had told me a moment before to take care of the right, and I understood it was in case we should have taken a position on that spot.

General Lee's Question. When you had reconnoitered the village of Freehold, did you find it afforded the security that was expected?

A. I found that the village did not answer any material purpose.

General Lee's Question. Did I give you any reason to suppose that the principle of our retrograde manœuvres was founded on an apprehension of being pressed and beat in front, so much as it was founded on that of having our flanks turned?

A. I did not know which was your principle. The only reasonable principle to suppose was this, of having your flanks turned.

General Lee's Question. Did you not observe in these retrograde manœuvres, that the different eminences through the extent of country, from Freehold to the eminence where General Washington had taken place, were all in favor of the enemy, so that the eminence on the enemy's side commanded the eminence on ours?

A. I did not remark that; but in some places the want of cannon was complained of.

General Lee's Question. What authority had you to suppose that the Aid-de-Camp, who you were told brought orders from me to move back your corps as you were advancing towards the enemy, was sent by me?

A. I was told so, but I cannot say by whom, and as I had only one battalion in the field, and the others had retreated to Freehold, where you were, I thought that such an order was coming of course. I cannot answer so well of the motion of the troops, as there was a great confusion and contrariety in the orders, and a complaint amongst the troops on account of it.

Q. Do you know the distance from the place where the troops retreated from to the place where General Washington came up?

A. Colonel Livingston's battalion, which was in the centre of the column, was, when it began to retreat, about one quarter of a mile in advance of Freehold.

Q. Did you think that the number of the enemy's troops that followed was equal to the number of ours that retreated?

A. The number of the enemy did not appear to be equal to ours, but I thought that intelligence had been received that all the British army were coming upon us.

APPENDIX D.

MEMOIR OF THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE, ADDRESSED TO THE COMTE DE VERGENNES, SECRETARY OF STATE, UPON THE SUBJECT OF AN EXPEDITION TO BE SENT BY FRANCE TO ASSIST THE UNITED STATES.[1]

18 July, 1779.

You ask me, Monsieur le Comte, for some ideas respecting an expedition to America. The uncertainty of our present embarkation must affect, at least as to the time of its execution, a plan which I consider in every respect exceedingly useful. But you do not require a definite *plan*, nor a memoir formally addressed to the ministry; and it will therefore be comparatively easy to comply with your wishes.

The condition of America, and the new measures which the English appear to be adopting, render this expedition more than ever necessary. Devastated coasts, ruined ports, commerce checked, fortified posts whence these invasions are made, all seem to call for our assistance both by sea and by land. The least effort made now would have more effect upon the people than a great diversion at a later date; and, besides securing the gratitude of the Americans, and particularly of the oppressed States, a body of troops would insure us great superiority on that continent. In short, Monsieur le Comte, without entering into too great detail, you know that my opinions on this point have never varied; and my acquaintance with that country convinces me that such an expedition, *if well conducted*, would not only succeed in America, but would be of essential service to our own country.

Aside from the interest of attaching the Americans to us, and that of concluding a good peace, France should consider how to destroy the means of future vengeance. On this account the capture of Hallifax is of infinite importance; but we should require foreign aid, and this enterprise must be preceded by ser-

[1] The original document is preserved in the Archives of France, t. ix. No. 42, fol. 154. It has been reproduced in Stevens's Fac-Similes, vol. xvii. No. 1609. See also Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette, i. Appendice II.

vices rendered in different parts of the continent. We should then receive assistance, and, under pretence of aiming at Canada, we should endeavor to seize *Hallifax*, the storehouse and bulwark of the British navy in the new world.

Composition of the detachment.

As I know perfectly that a proposition on a large scale would not be accepted, I shall reduce as much as possible the number of troops we should need. I put it at four thousand men, of whom a thousand should be grenadiers and chasseurs; to these I would add two hundred dragoons and one hundred hussars, with the requisite artillery. This infantry should be composed of entire battalions, commanded by lieutenant-colonels. If it should be desired to give commissions of higher rank to the older officers, you know that the minister of marine gives such commissions, which, when the holders return to Europe, have no longer any value in the land service. We shall need officers who know how to submit to annoyances, to live frugally, to avoid all airs, particularly a sharp and peremptory manner, and who can give up for a year the pleasures, the women, and the literature of Paris. Therefore we ought to take few colonels and people of the Court, whose habits are in no wise American.

I should ask then, sir, for four thousand three hundred men, and, as I am not writing to *the ministry*, allow me, for greater ease in speaking, to suppose myself for a moment the provisional commander of this detachment. You are sufficiently acquainted with my principles to know that I shall not court the choice of the King. Although I have commanded with some success a larger body of troops, and (I frankly confess) feel myself capable of leading them, it is not my intention to urge these claims; but it would be extravagant to answer for the actions of an unknown person, and since, setting talents aside, the judicious conduct of the leader, the confidence of the people and of the American army, will assure half the success, I am obliged, in spite of my repugnance, to present a character which I know, in order to establish my reasonings upon some basis.

Embarkation.

After this digression, Monsieur le Comte, I come to the embarkation of these four thousand three hundred men. As the coasts of Normandy and Brittany have been much harassed, I should propose to make it from the Isle d'Aix. We should find troops and provisions in that vicinity. The ports from L'Orient to Pasajes would furnish transport vessels. I hear that you have at L'Orient three vessels of the India Company, of forty guns and eight hundred tons; those

of the Carraques have, if I remember, from fifty to sixty-four guns and are of one thousand tons; a small number would suffice; they would soon be ready, and by reason of their strength the number of ships required to convoy the fleet would be reduced. As for frigates, we should find such vessels as the Alliance and the Pallas ready at L'Orient, etc. However, if you absolutely wish to use the vessels prepared for the expedition against England, it would be necessary to take them at St.-Malo in preference. L'Orient has some merchant ships of considerable burden. Those of the Compagnie des Carraques at Pasajes are still larger, and those vessels have, moreover, guns of large calibre, which may be of use either in battle or in silencing batteries on shore. Besides, they might be obtained in a very short time. I should embark the soldiers at two tons per man, and should transport the dragoons on foot with their horse equipment. There are many details which I should give if the project were decided upon, but which it would be superfluous to mention here. After the experience of Count d'Estaing, whose provisions almost failed him though he had biscuit for four months and flour for two, I should take the two latter, adding biscuit for six months, which would make in all eight months' provisions for the navy and the troops.

Escort.

As to our escort, Monsieur le Comte, naval officers must decide that, but, our transports being armed vessels, three ships of the line, one of fifty guns for the rivers, three frigates, and two cutters, would appear to me to be more than sufficient. The operation being especially a naval one, the commander of the squadron should be a very distinguished man. His character, his patriotism, are important points. I have never seen M. de Guichen; but what I have heard of his worth and of his modesty prepossesses me strongly in his favor.

Having arrived then, Monsieur le Comte, at the Isle d'Aix with our detachment and the squadron that is to transport it, we are to consider how to act, and our plans depend entirely upon circumstances. By the first plan we should sail at the beginning of September, by the second we should remain here till the end of January. We should operate in Virginia and Carolina during December and January, and should pass the remainder of the winter at Boston, where we should reap a great part of the advantages offered by the September plan. I should infinitely prefer this course to waiting until the month of January; I mean until the 25th or 30th of the month. It might still be possible to sail in October. This idea appears to me even preferable to setting out at the end of January; but, as the various operations are

naturally connected with the other plans, it is needless to detail this last one. It is said here that after the high tide of the beginning of August we need no longer count upon the descent. Besides, we are assured that the enemy's fleet is to be reinforced. Four or five weeks of preparation will suffice for the transports and the troops; it is therefore not unreasonable to make a plan for this autumn, and even for the month of September.

The advantages of commencing in that month would be, first, to secure Rhode Island against the enemy, to assure for ourselves an island and an excellent harbour until spring, and to open the campaign whenever we chose; secondly, to establish our preponderance in America for the winter negotiations; thirdly, if peace should be desired, to place an important post on our side of the balance; fourthly, in case the enemy should have spread themselves over any of the States, to drive them away more easily because we should not be expected.

Campaign to begin in the month of September.

A few days before our departure, and not sooner (to prevent the consequences of indiscretion), we should send three corvettes to America, with letters to M. de la Luzerne, to Congress, and to General Washington. We should say that "the King, fearing the consequences to his allies of the new sort of warfare which the English are adopting, and in compliance with the requests of Dr. Franklin, will send some vessels to America, and besides these some troops to disembark; that if Congress is in need of their assistance they will willingly lend their aid to General Washington; but otherwise they will proceed to the Islands." This form will succeed perfectly, and on my part I shall write, in my capacity as an American officer, some more personal letters to Congress and to General Washington, in which, confiding to them that we have substantially *carte blanche*, I shall explain my plans to my friend and request him to make the necessary preparations. We should announce here at our departure that we are going to serve as a garrison in one of the Antilles whilst the troops of those Islands are to act on the offensive, and that in the summer we shall be ordered to undertake the revolution of Canada.

November.

Expedition of Rhode Island.

The squadron, setting out before the 10th of September, would be at the point of Sandy Hook, on the coast of Jersey, in the first days of November, one of the finest months in the whole of independent America. This armament would then seem to threaten New York; and we should find, upon our

arrival, pilots for various other points and all necessary information. These pilots from different ports might, to deceive the enemy, be assembled under pretext of sending them to the Islands at the request of the French. We should intrust this duty, as well as that of the preparations and instructions, to a lieutenant-colonel of the royal corps of engineers, an officer of the greatest merit, and chief of the engineers in America, who, under cover of working at the defence of the Delaware, would remain very near Sandy Hook. If Rhode Island (which I do not doubt for a moment) were to be the proper point of attack, we should bear off in the evening as if we were going to the south, and, putting about during the night, we should land at Block Island and prepare for the siege of Newport.

There are some Continental troops at Providence, who would reach Bristol in a day; there are militia at Tivertown, who might also be mustered; Greenwich, having some troops, must have flat-bottomed boats,—those at Sledge Ferry would be sent down. All these we should find on the spot. To avoid the mishaps of last year, the naval commander should not lose a minute in sending two frigates into the eastern passage, and in forcing the middle one, a matter of trifling danger. The vessels found there should be destroyed; and, as the enemy usually leave a body of from six hundred to fifteen hundred men on Kanonikut Island, it could easily be seized, and we should concentrate our land forces there. If the wind should be favorable, the vessels might go out the same night; or else the others might be sent to join us. But all these manœuvres will depend upon circumstances. What is quite certain is, that the same wind that brings us to land will allow us to take possession of the eastern channel, so as to assist the Americans at Bristol and at Tivertown, and that if we choose we can force the middle channel. But in any event it is easy to make a descent in the manner I am about to describe. We should send into these channels the frigates or the vessels necessary to protect the landing, either real or pretended, of the Americans. The enemy would then be obliged either to disperse among the forts and consequently weaken their lines, or else to leave the field open to the Americans, who, by a diversion upon the lines, would force the enemy to keep them well protected and prevent their attending to what was taking place in their rear.

Newport is strongly defended on the land side, but all the shore which lies behind the town offers good facilities for landing; this shore is, indeed, too extensive to admit of being defended by batteries. There the French troops might easily disembark, and,

reaching at daybreak the heights which command the town and the lines, might seize the works from the rear and overwhelm the whole of Newport. This movement would in case of need be protected by the fire from the ships; the enemy, scattered and confounded by three false attacks on both sides of the island and on Bristol Point, would suppose that we had adopted the system of last year: the bolder this manœuvre appears, the more confident may we be of its success.

You are aware, moreover, Monsieur le Comte, that in war all depends upon the moment. The *coup-d'œil* of an instant would decide the details of the attack. It is enough to say here that, from my intimate acquaintance with that Island and the time I have passed on the spot examining all the means of success, I believe that, with this number of troops, and the slightest co-operation on the part of the Americans, I could pledge myself to capture it in a few days.

But, since it is necessary in war to consider all the possibilities of misfortune, if the expedition to Rhode Island could not be undertaken, if it should not succeed, or if nothing could be attempted at New York, we might then proceed with our expeditions to Virginia, Georgia, or Carolina, and pass the winter afterward at Boston, postponing Rhode Island to the following season, as suggested in the plan in case we should set out in the month of October.

As soon as we had captured the Island, we should have to write to the State of Rhode Island and offer to deliver the place to the national militia, unless the State should prefer to wait for the opinion of General Washington. They would take the latter course, and we should then be *requested* to establish ourselves there for the winter. The batteries upon Goat Island, Brenton's Point, and Kanonicut Island would render the safety of the harbor all the more certain, especially with the aid of our vessels, because the English are not strong enough to attack us again, and because they would never risk it in the bad season. We should receive supplies from the country; and, although it is said that provisions are very difficult to procure, I should endeavor not to use our naval stores, and should find more resources than the American army itself.

Southern Parts of the Continent.

The same letter that should announce to Congress our success in Rhode Island (of which, so far as we may depend upon calculations, I have no doubt) should mention our voyage to the Islands, and should inquire whether our assistance were further needed.

Their reply would induce us to render other services, and, with their consent, we should leave the hospital and the invalids at Greenwich, have the batteries repaired by the militia, and proceed to Virginia. We may expect, without being presumptuous, that the point of James River, if it were still occupied, would yield to our efforts joined to those of the Virginians. The Bay of Chesapeak would be free again, and the troops of that State would be able to direct all their force against Fort Pitt.

If the capture of the Bermudas, or some expedition of that kind, were considered necessary, it would not be impossible to employ the rest of the winter in carrying it out.

It is impossible to decide as yet what posts the English will occupy in America. Georgia or Carolina would, to all appearance, need our assistance; and the subsequent operations at Rhode Island could be decided on the spot. But, in order to form a general idea, it is enough to say that the months of December and January would be employed in the southern part of the continent. As the English are obliged to distribute in each of their ports a certain number of vessels, frigates, merchant ships, or transports, they would suffer, on the whole, a considerable loss.

The month of February would see us at Newport again, where we should employ ourselves in making exchanges with New York, and the French sailors, exchanged for soldiers, might be sent under a flag of truce to M. d'Orvilliers. Political interests might be treated of with Congress, and the commander of the detachment might go to Philadelphia to arrange with the minister plenipotentiary the requirements of the next campaign, and to present some propositions to Congress and to General Washington. I should propose to send for deputies from the different savage nations, to make them presents, to win them over from the side of the English, and to revive in their hearts that ancient love of the French nation which one day it may be important for us to find again.

Departure in the month of October.

It is needless to say here that if we should set out in the month of October the season would be too far advanced to think of Rhode Island. But the Southern operations could take place equally well, and their success would then be the more certain, because we should have the advantage of surprising the enemy. In that event, instead of proceeding to Newport, we should spend the winter at Boston, where we should be well received and be provided with every accommodation. We should open the campaign whenever we chose, and we should make preparations beforehand for a

great enterprise against Rhode Island, procuring at the same time through the inhabitants of the ports north of Boston, and especially that of Marblehead, all the information which we should send them to obtain at Hallifax.

But let us suppose ourselves established at Newport. The end of April opens the campaign, and Lord Cornwallis will be in no haste to quit New York. The fear of leaving himself unprotected on our side will cause him to abandon any enterprise against the forts on the North River. Perhaps it might even be possible for us to assist General Washington in attacking New York. M. d'Estaing thought before his departure that he had discovered that a passage might be made through the Sound. I leave this question to naval officers; but, without being one myself, I know at least that Long Island might be captured, that the troops might be driven off, and that, whilst General Washington made an attack on his side, batteries might be erected there which would be very harassing to the garrison of New York. But in speaking of that town, supposing even that Newport would be taken the preceding year, I am very far from being as certain of this as of the attack on Rhode Island, and I speak of it as a possibility only.

Supposition for New York.

At all events, Monsieur le Comte, arrangements should be made to act against Hallifax in the month of June. With the claims which the other expeditions would give us, I can answer for it that we should be assisted in this by the Americans. I could find at Boston and in the northern ports trustworthy persons who would go to Hallifax itself for us and procure all the necessary information. The town of Marblehead, in particular, still keeps up a smuggling trade with Nova Scotia, and would furnish us with excellent pilots. We should prepare the inhabitants of the north of New Hampshire and of Casco Bay who, under their General Stark, the same that gained the battle of Bennington, would be ready to march, and, if circumstances required, would march toward Annapolis. This country is inhabited, it is said, by people disaffected toward the English Government. Lately, when I was in Boston, I saw there one of the chief men, a member of the Council of Nova Scotia, who had secretly visited General Gates, and who assured us of the favorable disposition of a part of the inhabitants. Several of them are certainly in correspondence with the Americans; and, from what they affirm, a party might be immediately formed. With regard to ourselves, Monsieur le Comte, I presuppose that we should set sail on the 1st of June and that we should be accom-

Attack upon the town of Hallifax.

panied by such Continental frigates and private vessels as might be collected in Boston. Congress would undoubtedly give us the troops we might ask for; and the brigades which lately belonged to my division, and whose sole object at present is to keep the enemy in check at Rhode Island, having no longer any employment, would join us without impairing the main army. They would come the more willingly because, as almost all these regiments belong to the northern part of New England, they would be averse to recrossing the Hudson River, and would prefer an expedition of greater advantage to their own country. General Gates, who is popular in New England, and perfectly acquainted with Hallifax, has often proposed to me to organize an expedition against that town, with a combined force of French and American troops. Siege-guns and mortars would be found at Boston. Others might be sent, if necessary, from the magazine at Springfield; and the corps of American artillery is tolerably good.

The enemy would suspect our plan the less, because their attention is constantly directed toward Canada. The movements of the northern militia would be taken as indicating an intention to join us at Sorrel, near the river St. Francis, whilst we were ascending the St. Lawrence River. This belief, which might be strengthened with a little address, would awaken apprehensions at Quebec and would excite disturbances. In the present harassed state of the English, I doubt if they will leave in port any vessels capable of joining the squadron; and if a vessel of war should happen to be at Hallifax, ready for sea, they would probably despatch it to the threatened colony.

I have never seen the town of Hallifax, but persons who, before the troubles, were in the English service and spent most of the time in garrison there, inform me that the great point is to force to the right or the left the passage of George Island, and that a landing might be effected without difficulty, either on the side toward the eastern battery, in order to seize that battery and Fort Sackville, or, what appears to be shorter, on the side toward the town itself. The northern suburb, where the magazines are, is but slightly defended. The Bason, where vessels are repaired, might also be commanded. Several officers worthy of confidence have assured me that Hallifax is built in the form of an amphitheatre; that all the houses, without exception, would be destroyed by the guns of vessels which had forced the passage, and in that event the town would compel the garrison to surrender. As the troops would destroy all the works on shore, and the vessels of war easily carry the batteries on the islands, I am per-

suaded, and the accounts of all who have been there strengthen my conviction, that Hallifax would not withstand the united efforts of our forces and those of the Americans. I set aside for the moment the diversion in the north, which, however, appears to me certain, and which, if the troops should not go to Annapolis, would engage at least a part of the English garrisons in occupying the fort, and also hold in check such of the inhabitants as adhere to the party of the King.

The idea of a revolution in Canada is attractive to every good Frenchman; and if political considerations condemn it, you will admit, Monsieur le Comte, that they do violence to our inclinations. The advantages and disadvantages of this scheme demand a full discussion, into which I shall not enter here. Is it better to leave to the Americans an object of fear and jealousy in the proximity of an English colony, or to give liberty to our oppressed brethren, and recover at once the fur trade, the intercourse with the Indians, and all the profits of our former establishments without the expenses and depredations? Shall we throw into the balance of the New World a fourteenth state, which will always be attached to us, and which by its situation will offer a great preponderance in the troubles that will some day divide America? Opinions are greatly divided upon this point; I know yours, Monsieur le Comte, and my own inclination is not unknown to you. I do not dwell upon it, therefore, in any sense, and I consider this idea only as a means of deceiving and embarrassing the enemy. If, however, Monsieur le Comte, it should ever be brought under consideration, it would be necessary to prepare the people beforehand; and the knowledge which I was obliged to obtain when a special army was about to enter that country enables me to form some idea of the means of succeeding there.

But let us return, Monsieur le Comte, to Nova Scotia. Part of the American troops who will accompany us might be left in a garrison there with such of the inhabitants as should take up arms in our favor. Would it not be easy then to destroy or take possession of the English establishments on the Banks of Newfoundland? and after this movement we should direct our course according to circumstances. Supposing that we could return to Boston or to Rhode Island in the month of September, and that New York had not yet been taken, it would still be possible for us to offer our assistance to General Washington. Otherwise St. Augustine, the Bermudas, or some other favorable point of attack might become the

Banks of Newfoundland.

subject of our instructions. If, on the other hand, we should be ordered home, we might reach France in three weeks or a month from the Banks of Newfoundland and alarm the coasts of Ireland on our way.

Supposition that we start in the month of February or at the end of January.

If the month of September, which combines all advantages, appears too near at hand, if it were preferred even not to send us in October, it would be necessary to delay our departure until the end of January. In that case, as in the former, we should be preceded only fifteen days by the corvettes. We should be expected at the same place and in the same manner. We should pass the month of April in the extreme South; we should attack Rhode Island in May; and we should be before Hallifax by the end of June. But you understand, Monsieur le Comte, that it would be more advantageous to take our measures on the spot, and well in advance, and that the autumn is from many points of view preferable for our departure. At all events, you will not accuse me of favoring this opinion in the interest of my own pleasure; for a winter in Boston or Newport is not equal, by a long way, to a winter in Paris. With fifteen hundred or two thousand select troops thrown into America, it would be possible to aid General Washington, and to determine him to act on the offensive, by supplying him with good heads to his columns; and the French could be united to an American division for combined operations. This method would be better than nothing; but I judged that you wished for a plan which would produce a somewhat more considerable effect.

These are, Monsieur le Comte, the ideas which, in obedience to your request, I have the honor to submit for your consideration. I do not give to this scrawl the appearance of a very regular plan, but you will consider these different suggestions according to circumstances. My first desire at this moment is that you may be able to read a handwriting which is ridiculous enough in general, but which the length of this memoir has made still more irregular. The second is that you will bring to the reading of it an indulgence all the greater because my American maps, those of Hallifax excepted, were left in Paris, and consequently almost all my references are made from memory. Besides, I have been unwilling to weary you with details too long to write; but, if you wish to talk of them at your ease, the neap tides at Havre, rendering our departure at present impossible, will allow me time to spend three days at Versailles.

I am thoroughly convinced, Monsieur le Comte, and I cannot without violating my conscience refrain from repeating, that it is very important for us to send a body of troops to America. If the United States should not desire it, I think we should create the desire, and should even seek for pretexts. But on this subject we shall be anticipated, for Dr. Franklin is waiting for a favorable moment to make his proposal. Even if the operations of this campaign, or the movements of M. d'Estaing, or any other event, were to bring about favorable changes, there will still remain sufficient work for us; and would not a single one of the proposed advantages repay the trouble of sending the detachment?

A very important point, Monsieur le Comte, a point upon which I cannot forbear laying the greatest stress, is the necessity of profound and inviolable secrecy. It is needless to confide in any one; even the men who are most actively employed in fitting out the detachment and the vessels need not know the precise intentions of the Government; at most, the secret should be confided to the naval commander and to the leader of the land forces, and not even to them until the latest possible moment.

It will certainly be said, Monsieur le Comte, that the French will be coldly received in that country, and regarded with a jealous eye in its army. I cannot deny that the Americans are somewhat difficult to deal with, especially for Frenchmen; but if I were intrusted with this duty, or if the commander chosen by the King should act with tolerable judgment, I would pledge my life that all difficulties would be avoided, and that our troops would be cordially received.

There is a certain excellent officer, Monsieur le Comte, who would give much satisfaction here, but whom, from my intimate acquaintance with our allies, I should be sorry to see sent among them. There are many, however, who I am certain would succeed perfectly. A knowledge of the language would be an immense advantage. Unfortunately, there are few general officers, M. le Duc d'Ayen excepted, who speak it.

You will not forget that it is not to the King's minister I am writing. As for myself, Monsieur le Comte, you know my way of thinking, and you will not doubt that my first interest is to serve my country. I hope, for the public welfare, that you will send troops to America. I shall be considered too young, I presume, to take the command; but I shall surely be employed. If, in the arrangement of the plan, any one to whom my sentiments are less known than to yourself should propose for me either

the command, or a post more important, and should assign as a reason that I should be induced thereby to serve my country with more zeal, either by my counsel or by my personal efforts, I venture (setting aside the King's minister) to charge the Comte de Vergennes to speak for me as my friend, and to refuse in my name favors due to so mistaken an estimate of my character.

This memoir is so long, Monsieur le Comte, that it will deter you from asking me for any more. But even if you should tire of reading it, I shall not tire of repeating to you with what feelings of attachment and respect I have the honor to be,

Monsieur le Comte,
your very humble
and obedient servant,
LAFAYETTE.

HAVRE, 18th July, 1779.

APPENDIX E.

LETTER OF THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE TO THE COMTE DE MAUREPAS IN REGARD TO SENDING A DETACHMENT OF FRENCH TROOPS TO AMERICA.[1]

PARIS, 25 January, 1780.

SIR,—Since you were kind enough to grant me an interview, I have been twice to call upon you, with the hope of finishing a conversation which we had scarcely begun. But you are always so much occupied, and interruptions are so likely to occur, that, after having waited several days, I believe it will be more convenient for you if I submit my ideas in writing, and recall to you that part of the American letters which you considered interesting. As Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton has the entire confidence of his General, my prudent friend decided, for many reasons, to convey to me through that intermediary his personal views, in regard to which he knew I should not be deceived. What was not possible to accomplish during the last campaign it is useless to regret; what ought to be done in the next campaign appears to me to be pointed out by the opinion of General Washington; and in order the more fully to convince you, you will observe, Monsieur le Comte, that the following paragraph relates to the letter of his principal aide-de-camp.

[1] Archives of France, Etats-Unis, Suppléments, t. 1, No. 239 bis: Doniol, La Participation de la France, iv. 308.

After having referred to the commencement of our personal relations and to the lasting quality of our friendship, he adds, "*And whether you should come here in the capacity of commandant of a corps of brave Frenchmen, if circumstances were to bring about such an event*, or whether you should come as an American major-general to resume command of a division in our army, or whether, after the declaration of peace, you should come to visit me merely as my friend and my companion, I should receive you with the affection of a brother," etc.; which proves, Monsieur le Comte, when taken in connection with Hamilton's letter, the feelings of that General in regard to an operation to be undertaken *early in the spring*.

It is my duty to submit this paragraph to you, Monsieur le Comte, but my heart impels me more strongly to offer you my opinion, and I am doubly inclined to do so by my warm attachment and by the perfect confidence with which you have inspired me. I shall speak frankly to you; I shall not address the minister, but Monsieur le Comte de Maurepas; and if I should be mistaken, which I do not believe, I shall count upon your friendship toward me to relieve the embarrassment which I should otherwise feel.

Before the last campaign, Monsieur le Comte, I proposed to you that naval expedition, the effect of which you now see would have been so useful. *You approved my ideas*, but the plans were already made, *and that was your only objection.* Whilst you regretted that you could not adopt that project, you told me that it was then too late, and that we should have to *wait and see what would result from the operations already determined upon.* When I was taking part in those operations, and had only too much time to spare at Havre, I was requested to give my ideas upon a new campaign in America; and if these were in fact the same that I had presented from the beginning, it is because I am too well acquainted with that country to change my opinion. I received your approval, Monsieur le Comte, but you were then waiting to hear what Monsieur le Comte d'Estaing had done and what he thought. What he thinks can certainly not be opposed to the expedition; and when you wrote to me that *you would take all possible care that nothing should be done which could obstruct the plan proposed by me*, it was, if I may make bold to say so, Monsieur le Comte, giving me a certain right to speak to you again upon this subject.

Persuaded myself, as you also are, that this assistance ought to be sent, these are, in two words, the points of view from which

I consider it. 1st. Even if we should gain no advantage from it, the condition of America is such that it has become almost a necessity. 2d. If America could even do without it, there are so many advantages to be expected that it would be unreasonable not to employ in that country this small number of vessels and of troops.

The failure of all our great preparations in Europe, the repulse at Savannah, the pacification of Ireland, perhaps the capture of Charleston, are all items of news that will affect the credit of the cause and the condition of the finances in America. The total destruction of trade, the devastation of the seaboard towns by small British detachments, *the very dangerous extension* of British power in the Southern States, the offensive operations emanating from New York, are things which cannot be prevented unless the enemy be confined to the positions he now holds; and these considerations, in connection with very many others, make assistance *almost indispensable.*

On the other hand, Monsieur le Comte, a co-operation with General Washington would double the force and energy of his army; it would lead to new enterprises, and perhaps assure success. The capture of Penobscot, the destruction of Newfoundland, effected in concert with our allies, seem to me reasonably certain undertakings. An attack upon New York, or one upon Hallifax, which would be much less difficult if made at a time when a lucky chance had weakened the garrison there, might also be considered as worthy of being attempted. But, without wandering into the region of speculation, without even planning offensive operations, which must depend upon General Washington and upon circumstances, the excellent position of Rhode Island would then belong to the allies, the enemy would no longer have a harbor there for his large men-of-war, and by preventing him from detaching any of his ships we should perform a service for our own islands.

But, for that matter, Monsieur le Comte, it is useless to enter into the details of this project, and, since you approve of our sending out aid of this kind, I say to you frankly that we are losing precious time, and that the armament ought already to have been begun. It is important for it to reach there early in the spring; and what could be done with advantage *in the month of May* will not have the same effect if we postpone its execution. We must count upon a voyage of at least two months. We ought to be ready by the *end of February;* we ought to write to America in *fifteen days;* and I wish that in *four days* I could see

the *preparations* begun in earnest, for which it is not necessary to await an answer from Madrid.

But if, on the contrary, our clocks are too slow, Monsieur le Comte, we shall see the operation fail for lack of time or of diligence; and the interest that I take in it makes me wish most earnestly that this business could be settled in the course of a few days. Six vessels of sixty-four and fifty cannons and eight thousand tons burden can easily be brought together in a month; but the work ought to be begun in earnest, and every instant that we lose seems to me a new danger threatening the success of the expedition.

As to the land forces, Monsieur le Comte, we shall have to stop but a moment; four second battalions with their full complements, commanded by lieutenant-colonels, to which would be united their grenadiers, would be an inconsiderable force, which would be still further reduced before it arrived. Four battalions made a single regiment, a few days ago, and I should like to join to them three or four hundred dragoons on foot, several pieces of field artillery, and a small number of mortars.

The objections which have been made to this project may be reduced to two statements: *first*, that our allies have not the strength and the courage to co-operate with us; *second*, that this co-operation would produce jealousy among the people and disputes with the American army.

As to the first. As I have happened to see them facing the far-famed infantry of England and of Hesse, under circumstances in which their conduct would have done honor to veteran troops, I could not, without absurd affectation, refuse the tribute of my high esteem to those whom I formerly commanded. The confidence of my soldiers, which I possessed, and the talent which I did not possess, would not have sufficed alone upon those occasions; and, so long as no other foreigner has ever commanded a division of six thousand men, the second line, or the advance guard of their army, I have the right to declare, Monsieur le Comte, that if that army be still not consolidated, if there be even some alloy in it, yet we judge it with far too great severity in this country.

As to the second objection. It is not without foundation, by any means; but I assure you, at the same time, it is not sufficient to deter us. If, however, the French commander should not know how to deal with the sentiment in Congress and in each particular State, if he should understand neither the prejudices of the people, nor the different parties in the government, nor the way in

which to satisfy the army, nor the proper mode of dealing with the civil authorities,—if he should talk to an officer from Boston as he would to one from New York, to a member of the Assembly of Pookepsie as to one from the self-styled State of Vermont,—he would be absolutely sure to give offence, absolutely sure to defeat the purposes of his voyage. But, without considering, Monsieur le Comte, whether my intimate friendship with the General, or the confidence of the army and of the people, makes me bold enough to say so, or whether it be my *popularity*, to use the English expression, yet in the event of my having command of the land detachment *I will answer for it, upon my head*, that I shall avoid even a shadow of jealousy or of dispute.

Forgive me, Monsieur le Comte, if I refer to myself in this connection; but should I not be singularly unwise to answer for another whom I did not know? I am extremely fond of glory, it is true, and for the past year it has been an unlucky passion; but, for all that, if I were impelled merely by a desire to command men, they would give me more in America than I am now asking for here. If my ambition were for rank, I should not frequently have refused that which would have brought it to me; and I declare at this moment that the only title that I shall bear, and the only uniform that I shall put on, when I set out, will be those of an American officer. If I had wished to show the advantage of giving me the command, I should have allowed Congress to name me outright in connection with the Canadian project, instead of referring to me by intimation, and I should not have withheld the last part of Hamilton's letter. Finally, Monsieur le Comte (for, however distasteful it is to me to speak of myself, I wish to remove every suspicion of a personal ambition that is quite beneath my character), if I had intended to praise myself, I should have told you long ago both that Congress had selected me out of all the other general officers for an independent command of great importance, in 1778, and that no brigadiers, I believe, and few field-marshals, have led as many men in war, where I have at times been successful, and yet detachments of three thousand men were intrusted to certain persons of my age during the last war. I refer you for this to any one coming here from America, and I shall even add to it, very frankly, that I feel myself to be entirely competent to assume the responsibility of such a commission. But I shall content myself, Monsieur le Comte, with assuring you that I am willing to go out merely as a volunteer, if you wish me to do so; and in contributing to the French commander the small amount of knowledge that I may possess I shall

also forego for his benefit all the personal advantages which I have in America, not as a favor to him or to the ministry, but for the good of my country.

There is one interesting subject, Monsieur le Comte, which I shall not discuss at length, and that is the selection of a naval commander; the one who will play the most important part in the expedition. A captain will certainly be chosen whose ability and honor are well established, for in the absence of the latter quality, I confess, I have no great esteem for the former; and, since we are now speaking of the sea, allow me to repeat that, if a decision be not reached this week, if everything be not ready by the 1st of March, this unfortunate slowness will destroy the effect of the expedition.

If I were to command it, Monsieur le Comte, I should wish to take under me some veteran officers whose character I am acquainted with, and whose reputation and long experience are familiar to M. le Prince de Montbarrey. I should send to America within two weeks a reliable man, who should be approved of by General Washington and directed to make all preparations for our arrival. I should go to Boston with the convoy of clothing, of arms, etc., to be sent out; and then, considering ourselves as a portion of the American army, we should inquire as to the intentions of General Washington, which I imagine would be in the direction of an attack upon Penobscot.

This is a very long letter, M. le Comte. It has been called forth by present circumstances; it is justified by the message which you did me the honor to send me at Havre, but also, and much more, by my confidence in you and my attachment to you. I beg you not to consider it as a memoir to be referred to in the Council, or even before a committee. I am writing to you alone, Monsieur le Comte, whose goodness, I venture even to say whose friendship toward me, I know; and I should not have spoken so freely of myself if I had been addressing His Majesty's ministers.

At all events, Monsieur le Comte, accept the assurance of the respect and unalterable attachment with which I have the honor to be your very humble and obedient servant,

LAFAYETTE.

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